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VOLUME II

MISCELLANEOUS LECTURES
CHIEFLY ON ENGLISH LITERATURE

INTERPRETATIONS OF LITERATURE

BY

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VOLUME II

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VOLUME II

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CHAPTER I

SHAKESPEARE

THE humanistic school of English drama was firmly established by a group of university students, headed by the famous Marlowe. Very suddenly after the apparition of this group comes forward the most colossal figure in English literature,—and perhaps in all modern literature. This was not a student. He was not even a well educated man; he did not belong to the higher classes. He was a professional actor, which means that he had embraced a calling which in that time, and for many generations after, was considered ignoble. Yet this man did what no one else in any other country, since the highest period of Greek civilisation, had ever been able to do; and in more ways than one he probably surpassed the Greeks. So immensely superior to his age was this genius that as a genius he could not obtain recognition for hundreds of years after his death. It has well been said that no man can understand Shakespeare until he becomes old; and the English nation could not understand Shakespeare until it became old. In the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries Shakespeare was read and enjoyed only as schoolboys of twelve or fourteen years old now read and enjoy him—that is to say, he was read for the story only, without any suspicion of what an intellectual giant had appeared in the world. Nevertheless the sixteenth century was a great intellectual age, and it understood much more of Shakespeare than later generations proved themselves able to do. In the most degenerate period of English Literature, the period of the Restoration, Shakespeare was so little understood that people imagined they could improve his plays by rewriting them! No greater proof of intellectual degeneracy could have been

given. To-day the position of Shakespeare is that of the greatest figure in all human literature. He has been translated into nearly every civilised language; his plays are acted constantly upon all the stages of Europe; he has been commented upon and studied by the greatest scholars of Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Russia; and the volume of literature produced about him has become so great that no man could hope to read it all in a lifetime. Not thousands but tens of thousands of books have been written about his characters, about the meaning of his plays, about the relation of his life to his art, about his subjectivity, about his objectivity, about the chronology of his dramas, about the source of his inspiration, about his verse-endings, about everything imaginable in connection with his work. Shakespeare has become much more than a classic, a world-classic; he is a science. To become a "Shakespearean scholar" in these days is to obtain a very great distinction in the world of letters; and nevertheless one of the greatest of scholars declared only two years ago, when invited to deliver a few lectures upon Shakespeare, that he approached the subject with fear and trembling, because it was too large for him. And like all large subjects, the subject of Shakespeare has its danger. Hundreds of persons pass their whole lives in studying Shakespeare, in theorising about Shakespeare, in illustrating Shakespeare. Some persons have even become insane through the study of Shakespeare. And the overshadowing intellect that has produced these extraordinary effects—effects which continually increase and multiply instead of diminishing with time—was enclosed in the skull of a poor uneducated actor, who began life under the most unfavourable and unhappy conditions.

The first thing which I should like to be able to impress upon the mind of the student is that Shakespeare must be regarded, not as a common man or author, but as a phenomenon, as something in literature corresponding to the more modern phenomenon of Napoleon as a political, mili-

tary and economic force. Because, if the student can not do this, he can never hope to understand anything at all about Shakespeare. You must remember that Shakespeare is not only the greatest, but also the most difficult of authors to understand. • This does not mean that his language is difficult, or that his thoughts are difficult; the difficulty lies in the comprehension of the depths of his characters—that is to say, the depth of his knowledge of human nature. The great Shakespearean riddle, in other words, is this: "How did Shakespeare know?" Here is a man who has created hundreds of living figures or characters, every one of which is essentially and totally different from every other, and all of which are perfectly real, perfectly alive, perfectly interesting, never under any circumstances unnatural. To create one such character in common literature is to make a classic, is to achieve a reputation for hundreds of years, is to perform a feat almost divine; like the work of a god, it is a creation of life. But Shakespeare created hundreds of characters. I can not repeat this too often; because you will not observe the whole meaning of it until I have assured you that the other great English dramatists did not *create* any characters at all. They gave us moving and speaking figures which resemble living persons only as ghosts or dreams resemble living persons. The more you become acquainted with them, the less real do you find them. Sometimes they actually melt into each other like clouds, like vapours. They are phantoms. After having read all the plays of Ben Jonson, all the plays of Webster, all the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, all the plays of any other dramatist, you will find that they do not remain distinct in your memory. Not only do you forget them, but you confuse them one with another. Never does this happen in the case of Shakespeare. Every figure in Shakespeare can be touched, heard, and made familiar like an old acquaintance; put your hand upon its breast, and you will feel the heart beat. I will even say one thing stronger than this—it is

more easy to forget living persons whom you have really known than it is to forget one of Shakespeare's great characters.

Let me say here that I shall have to ask your patience, as some of what I am going to say may seem to you a little tiresome; but I think it is necessary in order that you may get a general idea of the meaning of the difference between Shakespeare and other men. I do not wish to tell you what you can find in books, but only what you will not find in books about Shakespeare.

This said, let us try to understand the secret of the force of Shakespeare's characters. Every one of you have seen a cat. You have seen it not once, but perhaps a thousand times; and as children you have certainly played with kittens, so that you had a good opportunity to study every part of the animal's body. Now how many of you, in spite of that experience, can draw a correct picture of a cat from memory? Perhaps one or two of you can. But can you draw the cat in more than one position? Perhaps one of you can draw it in two or even three positions. There, I imagine, your power stops. It is very doubtful whether you have ever known a man who could draw a cat from memory in any position. I might have said a horse, just as well; but a horse would really be much more difficult.

Now some of you can certainly draw very much better than others. You recognise among yourselves this superior ability on the part of one or two individuals, and you call it talent, or cleverness, or something of that kind. But have you ever stopped to think what this talent or cleverness means? Why should one of you be able to draw from memory better than any of the rest? It is because he has superior faculties; but what are the faculties? One is memory,—memory of that special form which we call the representative faculty. To put the matter very shortly and in very simple language, one of you can draw a cat from memory better than the rest, not so much because of manual

dexterity, as because, when *he thinks of a cat*, there immediately shapes itself in his brain a much more vivid and correct image of the animal than that which the memories of the rest of you are capable of forming. But we are not yet more than half-way toward the explanation of this extremely simple fact. Why should the brain of one student be capable of forming mental images much more exact than any of which other brains are capable? It must mean that there is some physiological difference. This physiological difference is like a difference in what is called the "sensitivity" of photographic plates. Some plates, you know, will photograph anything in one-fiftieth, one-seventy-fifth or one-hundredth of a second, while other plates work very slowly, requiring three or four seconds to define an image,—and the chances always are that during long exposure the images may become blurred or spoiled by accident. I do not wish to carry this comparison as far as it might be carried; the illustration is sufficient. Now this superior "sensitivity" of brain is found to be always coincident with a very high development of what is called in physiology nervous-tissue. I do not mean that this high development necessarily extends to all parts of the brain of the man distinguished by a special talent. The more the talent is special, the more certain it is that the nervous sensitivity is also special—that is, confined to some particular part of the cerebral structure. We can not go much farther than this. If you should ask the reason of such differences between individual and individual, I should answer hereditary accumulation; but when we trace the thing back as far as human knowledge permits us, we are stopped by the infinite mystery which lies beyond all life and which it is quite useless for us to try to understand.

I need scarcely tell you that it would be incomparably more difficult to draw from memory the correct picture of a human face in six or seven different moods than it would be to draw the head of an animal in several different at-

titudes. Still this is no very great feat. But to draw a character, the play of moral feeling which makes a character, and to do this in four or five different moods, is not a little feat but a very great feat indeed. Very few men are able even to express one of their own moods truthfully and impressively—much less to objectify it. Imagine, then, the gigantic power of the brain that could create thousands of different moods as expressed by hundreds of different characters of every age and sex.

The problem of Shakespeare is therefore a psychological problem; and if it took the world some hundreds of years to understand Shakespeare, this was only because Shakespeare was himself in advance of humanity several hundred years by virtue of intellectual superiority. A human brain, immensely developed beyond the average, can not be imagined by the average. The existence of such a brain may constitute a danger to the human race. Very much depends upon the direction given to its faculties. One such brain came into existence shortly before the beginning of the present century; and in the short space of eleven years—from 1804 to 1815—the working of that brain resulted in the destruction of 3,700,000 human lives (Taine, "La Régime Moderne," vol. 1, p. 115). For a long time after the accession of Napoleon to power the world attributed his ascendency to good fortune; there was no suspicion of the enormous range of the faculties of that mind—the mind that complained of the smallness of the population of Europe, and that dreamed of a conquest of the Orient, where it could use five or six hundred millions of lives for its operations. But when the suspicion did come at last, the existence of that individual was felt to be a danger to the human race, and by a desperate coalition against him, the nations of Europe succeeded in isolating him until the time of his death. The faculties of Napoleon were bent in the direction of war, economics, finance, and all forms of administration. Unfortunately the destructive tendencies domi-

nated the constructive. Now I would compare the brain of Shakespeare to Napoleon's; but the development of his faculties was altogether in a constructive and creative direction. In more than one respect we find points of resemblance, nevertheless, between the two minds. The most noticeable of the prodigious qualities of both was memory; and in both cases the faculties were hereditary, not developed by education. In Shakespeare as in Napoleon, the language faculty, although immense, was in a comparatively low state of cultivation. The compositions of both were marked by extraordinary faults—faults of form, faults of all kinds; yet the faculties in either case were almost incomparable. We know, for example, that Shakespeare's composition was not made like the compositions of other men. He never rewrote or changed his manuscript, if we are to believe the actors who played with him; and yet, thus flung down upon paper, his thoughts now fill the world.

I have compared the mnemonic faculty of Shakespeare with that of Napoleon; but only by way of general illustration. Really the memory power was very different in either case. In Shakespeare it takes a form so extraordinary that it is still a psychological puzzle. Attributing his knowledge of character to purely personal experience, we should have to say that he had the power of representing with absolute accuracy every feeling that he had ever known in any situation. No doubt a very considerable amount of personal feeling has been reproduced in his unapproachable dramas. But the experience of fifty lifetimes could not account for everything in them. Beyond experience, what could have given him the knowledge of his hundreds of characters? There is only one name commonly given to the power which enabled him to be so unrivalled a creator; and that faculty is intuition. But what is intuition? You may say that you believe that it is imagination in the form of instinct. And what is instinct? Instinct, the man of science will tell you, is inherited knowledge—is, in a certain

sense, the nonpersonal knowledge obtained not from the experience of one life, but from the experiences of hundreds of thousands of lives. Religious persons in western countries do not like these suggestions of science; and I do not think that I should be allowed to say in many western universities what now I wish to say about Shakespeare's genius. You need not accept my opinions if you do not like them; I offer them only suggestively. I shall say therefore that the faculty of Shakespeare represents something very much resembling the memory of thousands of experiences in hundreds of anterior lives, as man and woman, in different conditions of civilisation, and different parts of the earth. Remember, however, that I am speaking symbolically. I am trying to explain the nature of a faculty which can only be suggested by symbolism, because no science can yet furnish a detailed explanation of it.

This is what differentiates Shakespeare from all other dramatists; and, without attempting illustration, let us now turn to the subject of the man himself. One thing we know, through the help of modern psychology, which previous generations did not know about Shakespeare. This is that he was certainly a man of a most extraordinary and exceptional physical organisation. From his work we can discover that his nervous organisation must have been superior to almost any now existing; and, as I said before, unless this development is in one direction only, it presupposes a magnificent physical constitution. In the case of Shakespeare, we have proof absolute that his faculties were not one-sided; and that a more perfectly balanced character is not possible even to imagine. The first chapters of his life give us, indeed, the contrary impression; but the higher faculties of a man are not developed in early youth. When we study Shakespeare's life in the years of his maturity, we discover the unusual phenomenon of a supreme artist who is also a supremely good man of business, who achieved al-

most without effort a position and a respectability that no actor could have obtained before him.

I need scarcely say to you that all the stories and theories about Shakespeare's plays having been written by Bacon or by somebody else are silly nonsense, and that no sensible man now pays any attention to them. I shall not refer to them again. On the other hand, although we know very little about Shakespeare's life, the little that we do know is very important, and the documents concerning it are very exact. I shall speak about the facts of his career, however, only in relation to the study of his personality. He was born at Stratford-on-Avon in April, 1564. He was the son of a merchant named John Shakespeare, who appears to have been a man of some influence in the little town, and who held the office of high bailiff—an office corresponding to that of mayor—in 1568. When a boy, Shakespeare was apparently distinguished from other boys chiefly by his greater activity and mischievousness, but we can judge of this only from the general tone of a number of anecdotes and traditions. He was sent to a grammar school at Stratford, and there may have obtained the rudiments of an education, but nothing more. At the age of eighteen Shakespeare was married to a girl of twenty-six. It would seem that the marriage was forced upon him by his own fault, and also by a sentiment which every honourable man must respect. At the early age of twenty-one he had already three children, and no occupation—a very heavy burden for a young man to start through life with. About 1586 his father appears to have lost all his money and all his possessions. The family was utterly ruined. A more unfortunate position for the young man of twenty-one with a family of three children, as well as his own father's family to take care of, could scarcely be imagined. The next year he probably went to London. We hear nothing about him of importance for about five years. Then, in 1592, we sud-

denly hear the complaints from dramatists and actors that a new-comer is beginning to crowd them out, to dominate them, to do as he pleases with their dramas, and to monopolise public attention. In 1594 we find him playing before Queen Elizabeth at Christmas time. Thereafter his success begins. It is quite evident that from the time he entered London, Shakespeare, although a stranger, very soon obtained the mastery in the career which he had chosen, and that his domination over smaller minds and characters was founded not only upon some dim recognition of his intellectual superiority, but also upon the recognition of a character of immense force. No weak man, nobody not of a very masterful disposition, could have accomplished so much in so short a time. Very soon the murmurs against him were hushed. They were hushed simply because they had become useless. He had dominated not only those jealous of him, but also the English public. The great mass of the people who support the theatres were carried away by him; never before had such an actor been seen. The higher-class people, the gentry, the nobility, even the great lords about Queen Elizabeth, recognised Shakespeare, and gave him their friendship. Shakespeare did not appeal to them merely as an actor; he appealed to them as a poet. In the age of poetry, the age of new culture, the age of the Renaissance, this country boy without education presumed to enter the lists as a poet, and produced immediately the finest poetry of the period. Before that astonishing talent all opposition naturally broke down. In 1593 appeared his "Venus and Adonis," a poem in the richest and most voluptuous tone of the Renaissance; and even in that time it went rapidly through a number of editions, and was to be found in almost every lady's chamber. He thus achieved at once what ordinary poets must work for half a lifetime to obtain,—literary recognition. This was followed the next year by the poem, also successful, on the rape of Lucretia. But the finest parts of Shakespeare's poetical work, those

matchless sonnets which place him in the first rank of English poets, were not so quickly composed. They were written during a period of about sixteen years, portions only appearing at a time. The truth is that Shakespeare had very little time to write poetry, and wrote it chiefly for amusement or relaxation; his real business was the writing of plays by day and the acting of plays by night. He was doing, and doing easily, the work of ten or twelve men, but doing it infinitely better than twelve men could have done it.

No less than thirty-seven plays constitute his known work; besides which we have reason to suppose that he had some share in the writing or shaping of other plays. But of these thirty-seven, each is a masterpiece which still excites the world's admiration, and must continue so to do for hundreds of years to come. Sometimes we find him producing plays at the rate of three in one year. I do not know that this rate of production could be considered a very high one in the case of an ordinary playwright. Dryden, for example, afterwards willingly undertook to produce three plays a year, and did it for a short time; while, in our own day, the productivity of some eminent French playwrights has certainly been astonishing. But no playwright ever produced in one year three plays of really classic merit, much less anything approaching to a play of Shakespeare. What makes it particularly difficult to understand Shakespeare's productivity in this line, as I have suggested before, is the fact that Shakespeare was acting and teaching actors at the same time that he was writing; and this dramatic activity is the severest of possible strains upon the nervous nature of any man. Shakespeare does not seem to have felt it in the time of his youth and strength; he even seems to have found plenty of leisure to talk with various noblemen, to visit numerous friends, to attend banquets and parties, and to have sharply attended also to business. As early as 1597 he had made enough money to purchase land in his native town of Stratford, with the purpose of retrieving the

family fortunes, and of making a comfortable home for his family. Besides this he was soon able to make himself absolutely independent in London; he bought a theatre, became its manager, and employed those who had previously been his employers or comrades on the stage. In 1609 he had built himself a comfortable home at Stratford, and made an independent fortune and retired from the theatre, except as a writer of plays.

Now this means a very extraordinary life and still more extraordinary force of character. You can imagine for yourselves the obstacles which this man had to encounter, and you can appreciate the wonderful way in which he almost immediately broke them down, and rapidly made himself rich. But you must not forget another very important revelation which the story of this life makes for us—I mean the moral revelation. The difficulties in the way of success are not so much those which men are accustomed to think about, as they are those which men are not accustomed to think about until it is too late—as in the case of Marlowe and his companions. The first obstacle which a man really encounters in the world is the most dangerous and least perceived,—I mean Pleasure. Everywhere about a man of handsome presence and kindly character temptations swarm. Women favour him; drinking and gambling companions debauch him. In this respect the world is not at all different now from what it was in the time of Shakespeare. Pleasure is the real danger, and nowhere is this danger so extreme as in the world of the drama, where the conventions have always been more or less relaxed. Now there are two ways in which a young man can face this danger successfully. One is to impose upon himself habits of absolute austerity, to deny himself everything, to pursue one purpose only and never to swerve from a single rule of settled conduct. Such a man must, of course, expect to become unpopular—in other words, to get himself disliked, and to bear a good deal of suffering in consequence. The

other way is much more difficult, but also much more creditable. It is simply to take one's share of pleasures whenever offered, without at any time losing the power of self-command, and without ever doing anything of a disgraceful kind. Now the man who can drink with drinking companions and never lose his head; the man who can mix with characters of all kinds, men and women, and never commit a folly, must be a strong man and a wise man,—especially if he can do all this and yet keep the friendship of all classes. Now this is exactly what Shakespeare did. We have seen that in his youth he was not quite so wise; but he learned wisdom quickly. He was generous and at the same time economical; he was fond of pleasure, but never allowed pleasure to master him after he began the struggle for life; he was intensely imaginative and sensitive, yet he never allowed his feelings to drive him into any extremes; and in middle age he was able to retire to private life with a comfortable fortune. Only a wonderful man could have done this.

Yet it must have cost terribly. The volume of work which Shakespeare wrote, the character of that work, the circumstances under which it was completed, alone signify such a nervous strain as scarcely any man could undergo and live. In addition there was the strain of family troubles—troubles which to an affectionate and sensitive nature must have been extremely trying. And finally we know this fact—through modern psychology—that Shakespeare must have been naturally predisposed to great unhappiness simply because of his astounding power for abstract thinking. Any man having not only a very powerful imagination, but the capacity to make the shapes of his imagination living and real, must be in a very unhappy condition when put face to face with the harsh realities of existence.

You may have noticed the power of abstraction in imaginative children. They dream awake; they dream while you are talking to them; they dream while you are trying

to teach them. Stupid teachers are likely to be very cruel to such children. They mistake this tendency to dream—which means really that the imagination is powerful enough to dominate all reality except pain—for dulness, and they attempt to enforce attention by blows and harsh words. Clever teachers know that the only way to teach such children is to sympathise with them, to win their confidence, and to teach them altogether by appealing to this imagination, by directing it, and by cultivating it. Mechanical education means great suffering to children of this kind. But what I wish to remind you of is the effect upon the child of being roughly awakened from his little dream,—probably you have noticed the sudden expression of pain; and you will also, I think, have observed that a child, after having been three or four times in succession harshly upbraided for thinking about something else than what you want him to think about, will burst into tears. Now it would be a great mistake to think that this is the result of a wilful disposition; it is the result of a very real and very severe pain—mental pain. For the whole machinery of the delicate little brain, with its network of nerves and its network of blood vessels, is directed in one absolutely natural direction, invariably pleasurable; and the sudden interruption of its operation means more than a checking of pleasure—it means also a violent shock to the still tender cerebral mechanism. In grown persons of strong imaginative power, the pain of such a shock is probably greater; but the machinery is under excellent control, and the capacity to bear pain has been well developed. For the child, such experiences are not only cruel but dangerous.

Now, by his capacity to dream, the great poet in more ways than one very much resembles the child, and the practical world with which he has to contend treats him very much like a cruel master. His pleasure, emotional and intellectual, infinitely exceeding any pleasure possible to common minds, is being incessantly and pitilessly interrupted

and mocked by the hard facts of everyday life. If he be wealthy, and therefore able to isolate himself at will, he is very fortunate, and may be able to do great things. If he be poor and in a painful subordinate position, he is likely to suffer much more than can be even imagined; he will be able, in most cases, to do good work only at rare intervals; and the result of his struggle may be a total breakdown, physical as well as moral. Sometimes he becomes insane. Often he incurs the world's condemnation by extraordinary excesses. Remember that there can be no more foolish and wicked error than to suppose that the pain and pleasure of all human beings is the same, that one man can bear just as much suffering or enjoy just as much delight as another. In no two human beings can the capacity for pain and pleasure be exactly the same, for there are no two nervous systems exactly alike. The pain which a poet, a genius, a man of powerful imagination may feel, is much greater than the pain which other men have to bear, simply because of his more complex and incomparably more delicate nervous system.

Therefore modern psychology, studying the work of Shakespeare, perceiving its enormous physical cost, is immediately struck by the mystery of the man's power to endure what the world must have inflicted upon him. The great question is, "How did this man live?" No ordinary man could bear one-tenth of what Shakespeare must have borne; and yet he passed through life smoothly, triumphantly, and calmly. No doubt we have here a phenomenon very much like that which the psychology of Napoleon gives us. In both these men of genius there appears to have been developed, in a prodigious way, what is physiologically called inhibitory power. I mean this: Just as a very powerful engine requires a very complicated and powerful apparatus to check and change its movements, so a very powerful mind can be protected only from serious injury by something corresponding to those parts of the en-

gine which can instantly stop or reverse the motion. Napoleon compared his own mind, not to a steam engine, but to a chest of drawers; still his illustration was admirable. He said, "If you call one drawer or compartment of my mind Finance, another War, another Geography, you will understand my meaning when I say that I can always open one drawer at will and keep all the other drawers firmly locked." Shakespeare must have had the same extraordinary faculty. It is given to very few men, and it alone can explain Shakespeare's ability to endure the experiences of his career. I need scarcely tell you that control of the imagination and intellectual operations is an infinitely more difficult thing than what we commonly call self-control—which really signifies little more than the regulation of outer action.

But, as I have said, this must have cost enormously. After all, the mind depends for its support upon the body, and a very powerful mind is likely to exhaust and consume the body very rapidly. When genius has the emotional character, its possessor seldom lives long. Shakespeare must have been a very strong man, but he died in 1616 (some say on his own birthday) at the age of fifty-two. For such a constitution, we may say that this was dying young. But there must have been many extraordinary physical strains, also, upon the life of an actor in those days. We must remember the difficulties of night-life, the unhealthy character of London in the Elizabethan age, the non-sanitary nature of the early theatre—foul as an out-house. Besides we must remember that Shakespeare had plenty of domestic trouble, and domestic trouble wears out a man more quickly than almost any other kind of trouble. There is yet one other matter to consider—whether love for some other woman than his wife was or was not a cause of great suffering to Shakespeare. On this subject opinion is much divided. The evidence for the affirmative is chiefly, if not entirely, drawn from the poems of Shakespeare, especially

the sonnets. But I imagine that we can never obtain really sufficient evidence for the belief. When we consider how much of human life has been reflected by Shakespeare with startling reality, though foreign to his own personal experience, how dare we say that his marvellous intuition may not have enabled him to paint and to animate all the sorrows of a passion never indulged in by him except in imagination? Of course, while we think it likely that such verses as those beginning the "Passionate Pilgrim,"

> When my love swears that she is made of truth,
> I do believe her—though I know she lies,

were inscribed to a real person, I must remind you that it is equally possible the person existed only in Shakespeare's dream. About no other great genius is it so difficult to draw conclusions from published writings as in the case of Shakespeare. As a rule he never shows us his own personality throughout the multitude of his plays, but always other personalities. Why then should we suppose that he chose to be less impersonal in his poems?

Many different Shakespearean scholars have grouped the plays of Shakespeare in different ways. Some have made three classes, some four, others five and more. Some authorities would put the English historical plays in a group by themselves. But the general opinion until recently seems to have been that the plays should be arranged as Comedies, Tragedies, Historical Plays and Dramas or Melodramas. Now what I want to observe is that the student can escape all this trouble and confusion by accepting the opinion of the greatest modern lecturer upon Shakespeare, Professor Ten Brink, and by recognising that all the plays can be divided very simply into two classes only,—Comedies and Tragedies.

Real scholarship is not shown by the capacity to put forth an enormous amount of detail; it is shown by the capacity for synthesis. Synthesis means the co-ordination

of detail. It is just in this capacity that Ten Brink has shown himself especially great, and I should advise you to accept his opinion. I shall assume therefore that Shakespeare wrote only Tragedies and Comedies.

But if we were to divide his thirty-seven plays into these two classes, it is very necessary that you should know exactly what is meant by tragedy, and what is meant by comedy. Ten Brink uses these terms, just as our best English critics use them, in the classical sense only. Most people have an idea that a comedy is a play written to make people laugh—a funny play, in short; and that a tragedy is a play in which there is some killing or a good deal of grief or passion. Put into the briefest form, the popular notion is that a comedy makes you laugh, and a tragedy makes you cry. But this is all wrong, or nearly all wrong. Remember that the great and terrible poem of Dante is called, and very correctly called, the Divine Comedy. Now in the classic sense the difference between a tragedy and a comedy lies not so much in the incidents of the plays, but in the order of the incidents. A tragedy should begin with a calm and peaceful opening, or even a pleasant, merry opening is possible—and then should gradually become more sombre and terrible till the climax is reached. On the other hand, a comedy may begin even in a tragical manner; but the progress of the play must be a steady brightening of tone until a grateful conclusion is arrived at. It is not at all necessary that a comedy should make you laugh, in order to be a comedy. Some of the greatest comedies do not make us laugh at all. And now you will understand why Dante called his poem the Divine Comedy. It begins in Hell; but it ends in Heaven. The whole progress of the poem represents a brightening of conditions until the highest of all conditions is reached at the sight of the Mystical Rose.

Taking the classical meaning of the words, therefore, we can save all trouble by dividing the whole of Shakespeare's plays into tragedies and comedies. Yet the distinction

can not always be made a very sharp one. The reason is that Shakespeare's genius sometimes invented a new form of drama which it is almost impossible to class. "Measure for Measure" must be classed as a comedy; the ending of it is according to the rules of comedy. But, as has well been said, "it oversteps the bounds of comedy." There is no play more sombre and more psychologically terrible than "Measure for Measure." From first to last the nerves of the spectator or the reader are kept in a state of extreme tension, which sometimes accentuates into real pain—I may almost say agony. Few tragedies could be more tragical without bloodshed; yet we have classed the play as a comedy.

I think this is all that is necessary to say about grouping. You will see that there are no difficulties in your way according to the judgment of the best scholars. We may now turn to another subject about which an enormous amount of stuff has been written to very little purpose,—the origin of Shakespeare's plays. I believe that we can treat this topic just as simply, though not perhaps as tersely, as the question of grouping.

The first general fact which you should know is that Shakespeare did not invent any of his plays,—with perhaps one exception, the "Love's Labour's Lost." When he wanted to write a play he simply took a play that had been written before, and wrote it over again; or else he took some famous story which he had read in a book, and made a play out of it; in not a few cases, he used two or three different stories as the material for one of his own dramas. This is the general fact; and it is very significant. Only a great genius can do this. Shakespeare felt so conscious of his own power that the question of a new subject never even occurred to him. No matter how old the subject was, he could make it new; no matter how beautifully a story had been told, he could tell it infinitely better. Nearly all great genius in literature has acted in the same way. Genius does not need to invent, because it re-creates anything which it

touches. The greatest of French dramatists, Molière, did just as Shakespeare did; he took his material wherever he could find it.

In a general way, a knowledge of the sources of Shakespeare's plays is of no use to you at all, except in one particular,—the sources show you, better than anything else could, the enormousness of Shakespeare's genius. For when you hear it said that such and such a poet got his inspiration from such and such a story, and look at the story, and find in it almost nothing in the least resembling the poem, then you can understand what inspiration means. It does not mean that a man borrows ideas and expressions from somebody else—literary theft, vulgar plagiarism; it means only that the ideas or expressions of somebody else have excited in the poet's mind a new and completely original train of fancies. Of course Shakespeare sometimes took a whole plot from some other dramatist, as he did in the case of Greene, without the least compunction. But the plot was for Shakespeare nothing more than the frame of a picture. We must suppose that his judgments were made something after this fashion: "I have read Chaucer's poem; it is not badly written, but it is not true to human nature. Cressida was not, could not be, what Chaucer represented her; she was quite another kind of woman,—weak, selfish, and totally immoral. Now *I* will show you what kind of woman she really was, and what she said." Then he wrote, we may suppose, "Troilus and Cressida," and of course the power of his creation makes us see at once that Chaucer's conception was not natural. Shakespeare must have done this in many cases. Studying the history of Anthony and Cleopatra in Plutarch, he was led to form an idea of Cleopatra probably nearer the truth than that of any historian and certainly nearer to truth than that of Chaucer or any other poet. He said to himself, "This woman was a courtezan; but she loved. She could not be vulgar, because she was a queen and a Greek, but she was certainly a courtezan. I must represent her

therefore as ruling her lover entirely by the arts of the courtezan, although at the same time sincerely devoted to him, so far as the weakness and selfishness of her nature allowed her to be. At a pinch, she would sacrifice him, or anybody else; but so long as the pinch does not come, she loves him." Such is his conception,—incomparably difficult to carry out, yet supremely well carried out. Or take another case—the story of Hamlet. It was not a new story in Shakespeare's day, but Shakespeare saw possibilities in it that nobody else had ever dreamed of. So keen was his perception here, that it was not until Goethe had studied the piece that he was really able to understand the greatness of Shakespeare's knowledge. Hamlet is a victim of circumstances, but not of the circumstances suggested by Belleforest's narrative. He is a victim of circumstance simply and solely because his character is not strong enough for the situation in which he finds himself placed. A powerful man —a man of the stamp of William the Conqueror, for example—would have mastered such a situation in a moment; but Hamlet is too scrupulous, too affectionate, too sensitive, and too weak. Therefore he lives like a man in hell until the frightful tragedy ends. In every case we may say that Shakespeare's conception of a character was different from that of any writers who had studied such a character before him. Consequently he never could feel any scruple about taking an old story for his subject. The story might be good or bad; that made no difference. It could not be bad for Shakespeare, because with his genius he could always see possibilities in a story infinitely beyond the capacity of the man who had written it. And it is because of all this that I tell you, or rather advise you, not to give yourselves any trouble about the sources of Shakespeare's plays. The important thing to do is to study one or two of the plays or as many as you can, and find out for yourselves something of the wonderful beauty in them. If a really great translation of Shakespeare's plays should ever

be made into your language, it will probably be made by university students; and I can imagine no possibility of making it, except by a perfectly natural study of the work in itself, without giving any attention to commentaries, theories, chronology, or anything of what is called Shakespeareanism.

Will it not surprise you to think that Shakespeare was able to delight the common public during the age of Elizabeth with plays which only our own great scholars perfectly understand to-day? The explanation is very simple. The audiences of that time enjoyed the plays exactly as a boy enjoys reading them now—just as very clever stories well dramatized. Questions of psychology and all that sort of thing never enter into the boy's head,—and never entered into Shakespeare's head. His art was unconscious, he never knew how wonderful his own work was; he only felt that it was true. And he was speaking not to scholars or men of science, but to thousands of people who could neither read nor write. The poorest little village in Japan has a more comfortable theatre of a temporary kind than Shakespeare's permanent theatre could have been; and the development of dramatic accessories in Japan long before the *Meiji* era, was incomparably greater than anything which Shakespeare could avail himself of. I told you, during our talk about religious plays, that scenery, fine dresses, or costumes, and other attractions were used in these dramas during the latter part of the Middle Ages. But those religious dramas had been supported by public subscription and by wealthy municipalities; they could afford to pay for all this. It was quite otherwise in the case of Elizabethan drama, especially in Shakespeare's day. No theatre in London could then afford scenery or fine costumes or any other attraction except that of spirited acting and fine composition. Only rich people could even afford to watch the plays of Shakespeare under a roof. In the Globe theatre, for ex-

ample, which looked something like a panorama building in Japan to-day, a great part of the theatre was uncovered; and it used to rain upon the heads of those who could not afford to pay for what we call now private boxes. All this, and many other interesting facts, ought to be remembered as proof that Shakespeare had no idea of appealing to a cultured or to a special class, but to the people only. And nothing will be so important for the future Japanese translator of Shakespeare to bear in mind, as the necessity of perfect naturalness in reading the text.

Another thing against which I think it is the duty of the lecturer to warn the student is the psychological theory—the theory of a fundamental idea in each and all of Shakespeare's plays. A great deal of rubbish, very learned rubbish, has been written upon this subject; and it has all ended in exactly nothing. Shakespeare never had a "fundamental idea"; he had no other plan in writing his plays than to make them as close to truth as he possibly could. He never had even a theory of dramatic composition. He broke through all rules, not only because he did not care about rules, but because he had too large a mind to be confined by theory. There was but one limit which he obeyed, and obeyed magnificently—the limit imposed by the dramatic necessities of the stage. And in conclusion I should say that the sources of Shakespeare's plays exist only nominally in other books and dramas; their real place was in his heart and brain.

The subject of Shakespeare is so large that it would be easy to lecture upon it for at least ten years; but we have only a few days in the month to study it. Therefore I can not attempt anything like a systematic analysis of the plays —nor would such analysis, under present circumstances, be of much value to you. In treating of Shakespeare's characters, I can only attempt to show you in what respect they differ from the characters of other dramatists, not only Eng-

lish dramatists, but dramatists of almost every other country. The great difference to be remembered in a general way is their intense vitality, as I have said before.

Probably no two of us perceive and think about any inanimate object exactly in the same way; nevertheless the impressions that inanimate objects make upon healthy minds differ much less than do the impressions made by living persons. For an object, even an artistic object, appeals rather to what we might call the reflecting surface of the mind than to its depth. In the case of persons, the exterior man as object affects us much less than the interior man as subject. We are forced to think about people whom we meet according to their words and acts. Observing what they do and hearing what they say, we imagine the state of their minds, basing our judgment chiefly upon analogy. The reason, we think, a man feels glad or sad when he says or does certain things, is that in our own experience we have found such words and acts associated with gladness or sadness. And in a loose general way we are often right. Nevertheless, no two of us can be impressed in exactly the same way by the same person,—which shows that our several experiences and our several characters differ very considerably. Personally we have the converse experience. You and I have each three friends, let us suppose. To each of your three friends you must have found you are a different person. No doubt the three may be said to love you equally well; but you will find that their opinions of something you do are very different. And you will notice that while one of the three understands you better than the other two in some respects, he understands you less in other respects. No man can be exactly the same for two other individuals; and the more cultivated the class in which he moves, the wider is the range of difference in the impressions which he makes.

Now a perfect character in drama retains this living power of affecting different persons in totally different ways while remaining to each and all a very real and natural existence.

An artificial character in drama does not. The artificial character seems to everybody nearly the same thing; and the opinions of different persons about such a character will be pretty much the same. In other words, the impression made by the puppet-character is nearly the same as the impression made by an inanimate object—I do not mean to say there is absolutely no difference, but the difference is so slight that we need not talk about it. We feel indifferent to the artificial character; but to the natural character we feel as toward a living person. According to our several dispositions we like, love, dislike, hate, or despise the creation of the dramatist, just as in the case of a person to whom we have been introduced by chance or by request.

There are very few characters in all dramatic literature having the vitality of which I speak; but nearly all Shakespeare's characters have it. No two great critics have ever been affected in exactly the same way by one of Shakespeake's characters; and no two great actors have ever rendered one in exactly the same way. Every distinguished artist who has taken the part of Hamlet, Othello, Lear, for example, has given us an entirely unique rendering, without departing in the least from the play, and without adding an invention of his own. In short, to each great actor Othello or Lear seems as the real person would seem; and the difference of the various actors' conception is explicable solely by the absolute truth of Shakespeare's conception. A proper interpretation of one of Shakespeare's characters is enough to establish for the actor a great and lasting reputation; and with the progress of dramatic art in Europe, we find that the interpretations improve generation after generation. In our own time, the finest interpretation of Othello has been given not by an Englishman but by an Italian, the great actor Salvini.

The observation which I have just made leads naturally to the subject of the second characteristic of Shakespeare's creations to which I wish to call your attention—I mean their

comparative immortality. The humanity of Shakespeare's characters is eternal, if we can use the word eternal at all in relation to earthly things. I shall try to explain what I mean a little more clearly. Humanity, in spite of all theories, is a thing that does not change through the centuries. Civilisation is, after all, merely a garment for humanity; different civilisations are but different fashions. Of course I do not mean to imply that civilisation, in the sense of ordered living, communal living, is not a moulding force; that it does not develop the moral and intellectual capacities of men to their highest possible degree. But social living is incalculably old; and the changes it has made in human nature have been made slowly. A few years ago, the historian Froude, while visiting Norway, wrote an essay, inspired by his travels, in which he said that if an Englishman of to-day could be placed side by side with one of the old Norsemen, the difference in character would prove to be very small indeed. Religious codes of morals, manners and customs all change more or less in the course of time; but the nature of man changes but very slightly. What we are apt to call civilisation means for us fashions of life and thought—to few minds does it signify anything really permanent. Therefore I say that civilisation itself represents for the philosopher little more than the outer garment of humanity. The heart of man in the sixteenth century was not different from that of the men of to-day. And a true picture of human character drawn in the eighteenth century should therefore be just as interesting to us as if it were a study of contemporary life. The greater number of dramatic writers, however, never get much below the surface of the thing; very seldom have they been able to touch the kernel, the real human heart whose beat is not changed by all the changes of time. Therefore their plays and their books become neglected and forgotten. Therefore we do not act the plays of Ben Jonson, or of Fletcher, or of Ford, or of other sixteenth century dramatists; their characters

are all dead as themselves. But we do continue to act the plays of Shakespeare, because their humanity is of the kind that can not die. We only get a larger and a truer conception of Shakespeare's humanity as the centuries pass. If the work of Molière enjoys something of the same immortality in France, it is chiefly for the same reason—not at all for the same reason that the plays of Racine are still acted. But Molière is incomparably inferior in vital creation to Shakespeare. Indeed, to find any parallel to him, we have to go back to the Greek writers—I should say especially to Euripides, who can never cease to charm us because of the real humanity which he expressed. But the art of Euripides was fettered by artistic laws which did not exist for Shakespeare; and because the Greek could not enjoy the artistic freedom of the Englishman, he could equal the Englishman only in occasional moments.

There is yet a third fact to remember in connection with Shakespeare's characters: the extraordinary fact that they can not be grouped. I know that you will tell me that you have seen some attempt at grouping them; but I can assure you that no really great critic in these days would attempt any grouping of the kind to which I refer. There are of course several ways of grouping; I mean grouping by classes or types—classes of which the individual members all bear to each other a certain resemblance. In the case of every other dramatist, you will find that his characters can be readily grouped by types; all his villains, for example, represent nearly the same conception; all his virtuous women likewise seem to be more or less identical. But this can never be done with Shakespeare's characters by any one who really understands them; and the fact itself is the most triumphant proof of the incomparable truth of his conceptions. For in life, only the superficial observer and the superficial thinker can really class human characters by groups or types. Certainly we do find points of interresemblance between lovable persons, and again between hateful persons. Yet close obser-

vation must convince us that every human being is essentially different from every other human being; and that their differences are even greater than their resemblances. We can make only a few very loose and general rules about types of character. For example, it is at least true that individual differentiation increases according to intellectual development, and diminishes as we descend lower in the scale of moral life. Shakespeare has given proof of his instinctive knowledge of both these truths. Each one of his personages is essentially different from every other, but the differences appear greatest in those representatives of the higher classes whom he brings upon the stage, and less in the characters that are lower socially and morally.

Nevertheless, he seems to us—though falsely—greatest in his treatment of humble or of ignoble characters; I say "seems," because the delusion is altogether due to our unfamiliarity with this kind of art. We have been accustomed, for example, to conceive in our own minds a certain vague general idea of what a bad man is; we have been helped to do this partly through religious teaching and partly through personal experience. But our conception is almost certain to be wrong while we are young, and, if still founded upon personal experience, wrong even when we are old. Judging good or bad actions chiefly in their relation to our own pleasure or displeasure, is the very worst way of judging them; yet it is the way in which they have been judged by nearly every other dramatist except Shakespeare. Shakespeare presents us with the natural man always; and, with few exceptions, the natural man is not entirely bad. The ordinary villain is simply a person in whom the feelings antagonistic to civilised existence dominate the opposite class of feelings. In most cases Shakespeare shows us, what no other dramatist shows us, mainly the secret working of a bad mind,—the reason of the wickedness done. Thus we can not only understand Macbeth, we can almost sympathise with him. He is not a man incapable of good; he

is a man entirely dominated by one furious passion of ambition which urges him to commit crimes otherwise contrary to his nature, as his remorse proves them to be. Or take the case of Cloten. Cloten is one of the most cleverly drawn of Shakespeare's bad characters—a spoiled child developed by over-indulgence into a selfish and brutal man, who is capable of any wickedness when his self-esteem has been wounded.

But these are not the most powerful villains drawn by Shakespeare—quite the contrary. The most powerful is unquestionably Iago. It is of Iago that I particularly wish to speak to you. There is a very peculiar fact about the tragedy of "Othello"—that from the beginning of the play until the end we have no real explanation as to why Iago hates Othello and ruins him. Of course Iago says in one passage that he suspects Othello of having committed adultery with his wife. But it is quite evident at the same time that Iago does not believe anything of the sort. He merely offers a suspicion of this sort as a kind of self-justification At the end of the tragedy when Iago finds himself in the hands of the law—when he is about to be tortured in order to make him tell the truth—he says that he will never speak again; and we know that the tortures will not make him speak. He will die in silence, and the secret of his hate will die with him. Now it seems to me that this mystery of Iago's hatred is Shakespeare's greatest triumph in the portraiture of this scoundrel. This is reality itself. The really bad man, devoid of natural affection and of any generous feeling, is a character extremely difficult to understand. A good man is very easily deceived by a being of this kind, and can not comprehend either how or why he is deceived. Probably all of you will have occasion to meet at least once during your lives a really malevolent character; and if you do, you will discover that you can not comprehend such a character. You can defend yourself from his malevolence only through a kind of intuition; if

you try to cope with him, cunning against cunning, you will find yourself easily overmatched. But the great puzzle for a frank honest person in such cases is to find out why he is hated. This he will try to do, of course; but he will never succeed. Consequently he is apt at a later time to imagine his mysterious enemy more formidable than he really is—more intelligent. The plain truth is that the very bad persons are difficult to understand not because they are more clever than the rest of mankind, but because they are less human, less emotionally developed. The difficulty of understanding them is very like the difficulty of understanding the feelings and thoughts of an animal. Wherever there is an Othello, there is always likely to be an Iago; and Othello will always be the victim of Iago because he can not understand the existence of a nature so inferior to his own.

But now let us take a glance at the working of the malevolent mind in its turn. Does Iago understand Othello? He understands him well enough to play with him as a cat plays with a mouse, to make him ridiculous, to ruin him, to drive him to murder, and then to suicide. That seems as if he understands something about Othello. But really Iago's cunning is only the cunning of the primitive man, the pure savage. He understands nothing of Othello except the finer emotions of the man in regard to love and friendship, and he understands these only as weaknesses. He sincerely believes them to be weaknesses. Such feelings, he thinks, are a dangerous form of pleasure; a man who has affections and sentiments can at any moment be deceived and destroyed. And he sets to work with a sort of amused curiosity to deceive Othello. We must imagine him thinking to himself somewhat like this: "They have made this man General-in-Chief. They think he is a great soldier and a very wise person. I am only a common soldier, but see what I can do with this man. I can lead him by the nose; I can make him believe any lie—even the most absurd;

I can turn him against his friends; I can make him murder his wife! I can make him kill himself, and disgrace his name for all time. Yet this man whom I can thus play with, as I should play with a doll, they have made General-in-Chief! What fools they must be. Surely *I* could serve the government better than this foolish baby whom I can do as I please with." Without any question, Iago believes himself to be incomparably superior to Othello; and it is probable that this feeling has something to do with his hatred. But not all of it can be thus explained; we must recognise here also the same sort of natural cruelty which prompts the wild monkey to pluck a bird alive, or the cat to torture her prey before killing it. Now my theory is simply this, that Iago could not, even if he had wished, have told us why he hated Othello. The really malevolent being can never tell the reason for his malevolence when that malevolence is merely instinctive, any more than a cat could tell, were she able to speak, why she finds it so pleasurable to tease a mouse before killing it. The normally balanced mind is too apt to imagine that there must be some relative cause for a revengeful or malicious act. It is almost impossible for a good man to imagine that a cruel thing can be done without provocation. But it is just for that reason that a good man is so easily deceived. He does not know that there is such a thing as hatred which is inborn, instinctive, intuitive; and that in every thousand men we should probably find at least one in whom this savage form of malice survives. Shakespeare's dramas, when closely analysed, present us with all these facts; and his Iago is the most absolutely natural of his painful creations. I should like to call your attention also to another of Shakespeare's villains, popularly considered the most atrocious of all—Aaron in "Titus Andronicus." I can not agree with this popular judgment. I do not think that Aaron is nearly so great a villain as Iago. In Aaron, Shakespeare gives us a picture of the primitive man, the real savage, without any

sense of morals, and scarcely any sense of pity. He is cruel, he is lustful, he is immensely cunning,—but he has affection. This is a very important difference. He loves his black child, and he is ready to fight the whole world to save it; otherwise he is an absolute barbarian. But Iago is the civilised man, the polished Italian villain, entirely ruled by interest and malice, and totally insensible to affection of any possible kind.

Even when Shakespeare brings upon the stage such characters as courtezans, every person is distinctively individual. From Cleopatra to Doll Tearsheet the distance is not greater than the distance which Shakespeare always established between any two types of this sort. Notice the quiet courteous woman-of-the-town in the "Comedy of Errors," and the character of the woman in "Pericles"; they are miles apart. But it is rather in the most charming types of good women that his power to individualize seems most astonishing, as far as female characters are concerned. I shall call your attention to only one group—of course I mean "group" simply in my own purely arbitrary sense. Shakespeare gives us three different studies of women disguised as boys in three different plays: "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night" and "Cymbeline."

Nothing could be more difficult than to make three perfectly natural and yet essentially distinct conceptions under these circumstances. But this has been supremely well accomplished. Rosalind, the charming, saucy, mischievous, playful, shrewd but withal very tender, and in the best sense, innocent girl, is a type that any Englishman can recognise as being quite possible to-day. She is a girl of courage and daring, able to master the most difficult situation by goodness of heart and firm resolve combined. She can do very dangerous things; but she is strong enough to do them, and you may be sure that she will never make a moral mistake. Viola in "Twelfth Night" is a much slighter being. She is sweet but timid, and we are kept uneasy about her

until the end of the play. This is the kind of girl that fortune has to help; she is not strong enough to master a difficult situation, as Rosalind would; but she is clever, and her gentleness saves her under circumstances where force would be less successful. Imogene in "Cymbeline" is the child-woman—totally unfit to bear hardship, and still less able to bear unkindness. Under no circumstances could you imagine any two out of these three to be sisters. Each is as different from the rest as if she belonged to a different nation, or rather, a different race. Perhaps Rosalind is the most English type of the three.

CHAPTER II

NOTE ON THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE

SUCH advice as I now offer in this connection may be summed up in these few words; the study of Shakespeare, to be profitable in a literary sense, must be study based upon imagination. I mean that the best way to study a play of Shakespeare is to try to understand perfectly, not the language, which is often a matter of very secondary importance, but the situations. All the art of Shakespeare being based upon imagination, being in itself the highest possible expression of the highest power to which the human imagination has yet attained, it is imaginatively that we should study it. To approach Shakespeare, the student ought first to get rid of the idea that he is about to study a monument of language. Certainly in his best moments the language of Shakespeare rises to a height of sublimity which that of no other poet has reached. But such moments do not represent the level of Shakespeare's ordinary work,—a work teeming with faults, faults of a hundred kinds, faults such as no Victorian poet would dare to make. The style and the language of Shakespeare are the least important part of his creations, while in the other poets they form the most important part. The man of genius can afford to write as badly as he pleases, and Shakespeare is the best example of such license. The ordinary man, on the contrary, has to be very careful how he writes, for his imagination is weak and commonplace; having little to say, everything depends upon how he says it. Ben Jonson long ago recognised Shakespeare's weakness. "He is said," observes Jonson, "never to have blotted a line. Would to God that he had blotted a thousand!" But for all that, Jonson recognised that Shakespeare would live "for all time." He saw that the

faults little affected the value of the work in which they abounded. And so it were better that in reading Shakespeare you should begin by paying least attention to the language and most attention to the action—or, to be more explicit, the living incident of the plays. Of course there is a language-study of Shakespeare. The texts of Shakespeare can not be ignored in any scientific study of Elizabethan English. There is a Shakespearean grammar; there are many Shakespearean glossaries; there are many Shakespearean concordances; and there are countless commentaries and dissertations and analyses. But all this represents not so much philology as philological specialism; and unless you have made up your minds to devote twenty or twenty-five years of study to Tudor English alone, I should plainly advise you to pay no attention whatever to all this. The first object of literary training ought to be, even if it is not, to enable the student to produce literature. Otherwise his studies are apt to be merely ornamental. Now the value of a rational and careful study of Shakespeare should be in the effect that such study will have upon the creative faculty of the student,—teaching him how to use his imagination, how to define his ideas into living realities, how to write an incident of real life so as to make it seem real to the person who reads it.

Careful reading of the plays ought to help a great deal in this direction; but everything will depend upon the natural faculty of the student. Not everybody can create. This is the privilege of the very few; but it is to such very few that I particularly address these remarks.

What you are now, is no indication of what you may be in future time. I doubt whether any one of you knows; for the higher literary faculties,—the creative faculties,—are seldom developed to any great extent at your age. Except in the case of extraordinary genius, such faculties seldom show themselves in any marked form before the age of thirty-five or even later; their development depends a very

great deal upon relative experience, and a very young man can seldom have such experience except at the expense of education. So in recommending to you the study of Shakespeare as the most important of all possible literary studies, I do not wish you to imagine that you are going to obtain any extraordinary immediate results from that study. The effect of it you can not hope even to feel within another ten years; and some of you may find the benefit only at a much later period in life.

Now I am almost sure that somebody is going to ask me what would be the best play to study first. This would be a very sensible question, and I shall consider it. First of all, let me tell you that those texts of Shakespeare which you have already studied—such as "Hamlet" or "Julius Cæsar" —ought not to be looked at again for a number of years. The obligatory study of a Shakespearean play not only teaches a boy nothing about Shakespeare, but very commonly disgusts him with the subject. My own personal experience of having been obliged as a boy to study and to recite "Hamlet" was that I could not bear to look at the play for twenty-five years after. I had learned it by heart —parts of it; but I did not understand it at all, nor did I understand it until I reached middle age. I did not even want to understand it. The reason is that our study of "Hamlet" had been merely rhetorical and grammatical; we were kept to the letter of the text, nothing being done to cultivate the student's imagination, or to interest him emotionally in the incidents of the great tragedy. I am convinced that, for literary purposes, this system of teaching and studying is entirely wrong; and for that reason I warn you against it. Should any of you really wish to make a sensible study of Shakespeare, I should say, take the play that you like best and translate it into your own language; but not into classic form,—try to translate it into the living speech of to-day, into the ordinary language of conversation. It is by doing this that the power of the thing will first show

itself to you. At a later time you might wish, for other and obvious reasons, to give it another literary form; but you will be able to do this better by first putting it into colloquial form. Otherwise you are very likely to waste time in a struggle with words, which will oblige you to remain temporarily indifferent to the ideas—that is, to the emotional value of the whole.

But I have not yet touched the question of my own preference in the selection of a play for study. Some years ago, when conversing with a foreign professor, I asked him why so little attention had been given in the higher study of Shakespeare by university students to "Measure for Measure." It is not of course a play to be read by little boys, but there is no play which seems to me to deserve more attention from a literary class of young men. After some conversation on the subject he remarked that in Japan the play could hardly be understood. Now the remark, as far as the popular theatre is concerned, was very true. It would require a great deal of changing to make that play acceptable to a Japanese public. Even in England it has been very seldom heard of on the stage in modern times. But I should recommend the study of this play to you just because the dominant moral idea in it is very different from the corresponding moral idea in oriental countries, and because to understand the ethical spirit of western literature in general, the eastern students must begin by getting a perfect understanding of these foreign ideas. It is not at all necessary that you should be in sympathy with them; it is only necessary that you should comprehend them sufficiently to sympathise with the pain or pleasure of the characters who in a drama are influenced by them. For example, in this play that I speak of, the actions of Isabel can be perfectly understood only by one who perfectly understands the mediæval idea of chastity, the superstitions relating to it, the enormous exaggeration of its importance in religious teaching and especially in ascetic doctrine. To help in a

thorough understanding of this, I should especially recommend the reading of the remarkable chapters on this subject in Lecky's "History of European Morals." But once understood, I think that any intelligent student could not fail to be very much impressed by the sombre and powerful passion of the play, by its terrible yet truthful picture of human weakness in the person of a judge, and of moral strength on the part of a weak girl who has to meet and master one of the most cruel problems that could be offered to a woman during the middle ages. This play is my own favourite among what are usually called the comedies; and I think that the very difficulties connected with the studies of it are difficulties important for you to master. Next to this, I believe that I should recommend the much lighter comedy of "Twelfth Night." It is charmingly adapted for a study by translation into the colloquial, and the varieties of characters in it are unusually large. Here on the other hand you would find scarcely anything in the human nature depicted which is not as much Japanese as European. Of course the customs and manners are those of another country and another time, but the characters belong to universal humanity. I think you will agree with me that the roisterers Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, the clever and malicious Maria and the stupid and conceited Malvolio, as types of servants, and not a few other personages in the play, can be partly paralleled in Japanese drama and in the old Japanese romances.

This, for the time being, is the best advice that I can offer you. No possible study in English literature can be so valuable to you as that of Shakespeare, if you follow it upon the sensible lines which I have attempted to indicate; for nothing has appeared since the age of Elizabeth that can bear comparison with even the worst of his work, nor is it likely that in another hundred years anything of equal genius can be produced.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

It is no exaggeration to say that the English Bible is, next to Shakespeare, the greatest work in English literature, and that it will have much more influence than even Shakespeare upon the written and spoken language of the English race. For this reason, to study English literature without some general knowledge of the relation of the Bible to that literature would be to leave one's literary education very incomplete. It is not necessary to consider the work from a religious point of view at all; indeed, to so consider it would be rather a hindrance to the understanding of its literary excellence. Some persons have ventured to say that it is only since Englishmen ceased to believe in the Bible that they began to discover how beautiful it was. This is not altogether true; but it is partly true. For it is one thing to consider every word of a book as the word of God or gods, and another thing to consider it simply as the work of men like ourselves. Naturally we should think it our duty to suppose the work of a divine being perfect in itself, and to imagine beauty and truth where neither really exists. The wonder of the English Bible can really be best appreciated by those who, knowing it to be the work of men much less educated and cultivated than the scholars of the nineteenth century, nevertheless perceive that those men were able to do in literature what no man of our own day could possibly do.

Of course in considering the work of the translators, we must remember the magnificence of the original. I should not like to say that the Bible is the greatest of all religious books. From the moral point of view it contains very much that we can not to-day approve of; and what is good

in it can be found in the sacred books of other nations. Its ethics can not even claim to be absolutely original. The ancient Egyptian scriptures contain beauties almost superior in moral exaltation to anything contained in the Old Testament; and the sacred books of other eastern nations, notably the sacred books of India, surpass the Hebrew scriptures in the highest qualities of imagination and of profound thought. It is only of late years that Europe, through the labour of Sanskrit and Pali scholars, has become acquainted with the astonishing beauty of thought and feeling which Indian scholars enshrined in scriptures much more voluminous than the Hebrew Bible; and it is not impossible that this far off literature will some day influence European thought quite as much as the Jewish Bible. Everywhere to-day in Europe and America the study of Buddhist and Sanskrit literature is being pursued not only with eagerness but with enthusiasm—an enthusiasm which sometimes reaches to curious extremes. I might mention, in example, the case of a rich man who recently visited Japan on his way from India. He had in New Zealand a valuable property; he was a man of high culture, and of considerable social influence. One day he happened to read an English translation of the "Bhagavad-Gita." Almost immediately he resolved to devote the rest of his life to religious study in India, in a monastery among the mountains; and he gave up wealth, friends, society, everything that western civilisation could offer him, in order to seek truth in a strange country. Certainly this is not the only instance of the kind; and while such incidents can happen, we may feel sure that the influence of religious literature is not likely to die for centuries to come.

But every great scripture, whether Hebrew, Indian, Persian, or Chinese, apart from its religious value will be found to have some rare and special beauty of its own; and in this respect the original Bible stands very high as a monument of sublime poetry and of artistic prose. If it is not

the greatest of religious books as a literary creation, it is at all events one of the greatest; and the proof is to be found in the inspiration which millions and hundreds of millions, dead and living, have obtained from its utterances. The Semitic races have always possessed in a very high degree the genius of poetry, especially poetry in which imagination plays a great part; and the Bible is the monument of Semitic genius in this regard. Something in the serious, stern, and reverential spirit of the genius referred to made a particular appeal to western races having certain characteristics of the same kind. Themselves uncultivated in the time that the Bible was first made known to them, they found in it almost everything that they thought and felt, expressed in a much better way than they could have expressed it. Accordingly the northern races of Europe found their inspiration in the Bible; and the enthusiasm for it has not yet quite faded away.

But the value of the original, be it observed, did not make the value of the English Bible. Certainly it was an inspiring force; but it was nothing more. The English Bible is perhaps a much greater piece of fine literature, altogether considered, than the Hebrew Bible. It was so for a particular reason which it is very necessary for the student to understand. The English Bible is a product of literary evolution.

In studying English criticisms upon different authors, I think that you must have sometimes felt impatient with the critics who told you, for example, that Tennyson was partly inspired by Wordsworth and partly by Keats and partly by Coleridge; and that Coleridge was partly inspired by Blake and Blake by the Elizabethans, and so on. You may have been tempted to say, as I used very often myself to say, "What does it matter where the man got his ideas from? I care only for the beauty that is in his work, not for a history of his literary education." But to-day the value of the study of such relations appears in quite a new light.

Evolutional philosophy, applied to the study of literature as to everything else, has shown us conclusively that man is not a god who can make something out of nothing, and that every great work of genius must depend even less upon the man of genius himself than upon the labours of those who lived before him. Every great author must draw his thoughts and his knowledge in part from other great authors, and these again from previous authors, and so on back, till we come to that far time in which there was no written literature, but only verses learned by heart and memorised by all the people of some one tribe or place, and taught by them to their children and to their grandchildren. It is only in Greek mythology that the divinity of Wisdom leaps out of a god's head, in full armour. In the world of reality the more beautiful a work of art, the longer, we may be sure, was the time required to make it, and the greater the number of different minds which assisted in its development.

So with the English Bible. No one man could have made the translation of 1611. No one generation of men could have done it. It was not the labour of a single century. It represented the work of hundreds of translators working through hundreds of years, each succeeding generation improving a little upon the work of the previous generation, until in the seventeenth century the best had been done of which the English brain and the English language was capable. In no other way can the surprising beauties of style and expression be explained. No subsequent effort could improve the Bible of King James. Every attempt made since the seventeenth century has only resulted in spoiling and deforming the strength and the beauty of the authorised text.

Now you will understand why, from the purely literary point of view, the English Bible is of the utmost importance for study. Suppose we glance for a moment at the principal events in the history of this evolution.

The first translation of the Bible into a western tongue was that made by Jerome (commonly called Saint Jerome) in the fourth century; he translated directly from the Hebrew and other Arabic languages into Latin, then the language of the Empire. This translation into Latin was called the Vulgate,—from *vulgare*, "to make generally known." The Vulgate is still used in the Roman church. The first English translations which have been preserved to us were made from the Vulgate, not from the original tongues.

First of all, John Wycliffe's Bible may be called the foundation of the seventeenth century Bible. Wycliffe's translation, in which he was helped by many others, was published between 1380 and 1388. So we may say that the foundation of the English Bible dates from the fourteenth century, one thousand years after Jerome's Latin translation. But Wycliffe's version, excellent as it was, could not serve very long: the English language was changing too quickly. Accordingly, in the time of Henry VIII Tyndale and Coverdale, with many others, made a new translation, this time not from the Vulgate, but from the Greek text of the great scholar Erasmus. This was the most important literary event of the time, for "it coloured the entire complexion of subsequent English prose,"—to use the words of Professor Gosse. This means that all prose in English written since Henry VIII has been influenced, directly or indirectly, by the prose of Tyndale's Bible, which was completed about 1535. Almost at the same time a number of English divines, under the superintendence of Archbishop Cranmer, gave to the English language a literary treasure scarcely inferior to the Bible itself, and containing wonderful translations from the Scriptures,—the "Book of Common Prayer." No English surpasses the English of this book, still used by the church; and many translators have since found new inspiration from it.

A revision of this famous Bible was made in 1565, en-

titled "The Bishops' Bible." The cause of the revision was largely doctrinal, and we need not trouble ourselves about this translation farther than to remark that Protestantism was re-shaping the Scriptures to suit the new state religion. Perhaps this edition may have had something to do with the determination of the Roman Catholics to make an English Bible of their own. The Jesuits began the work in 1582 at Rheims, and by 1610 the Roman Catholic version known as the Douay (or Douai) version—because of its having been made chiefly at the Catholic College of Douai in France—was completed. This version has many merits; next to the wonderful King James version, it is certainly the most poetical; and it has the further advantage of including a number of books which Protestantism has thrown out of the authorised version, but which have been used in the Roman church since its foundation. But I am speaking of the book only as a literary English production. It was not made with the help of original sources; its merits are simply those of a melodious translation from the Latin Vulgate.

At last, in 1611, was made, under the auspices of King James, the famous King James version; and this is the great literary monument of the English language. It was the work of many learned men; but the chief worker and supervisor was the Bishop of Winchester, Lancelot Andrews, perhaps the most eloquent English preacher that ever lived. He was a natural-born orator, with an exquisite ear for the cadences of language. To this natural faculty of the Bishop's can be attributed much of the musical charm of the English in which the Bible was written. Still, it must not be supposed that he himself did all the work, or even more than a small proportion of it. What he did was to tone it; he overlooked and corrected all the text submitted to him, and suffered only the best forms to survive. Yet what magnificent material he had to choose from! All the

translations of the Bible that had been made before his time were carefully studied with a view to the conservation of the best phrases, both for sound and for form. We must consider the result not merely as a study of literature in itself, but also as a study of eloquence; for every attention was given to those effects to be expected from an oratorical recitation of the text in public.

This marks the end of the literary evolution of the Bible. Everything that has since been done has only been in the direction of retrogression, of injury to the text. We have now a great many later versions, much more scholarly, so far as correct scholarship is concerned, than the King James version, but none having any claim to literary importance. Unfortunately, exact scholars are very seldom men of literary ability; the two faculties are rarely united. The Bible of 1870, known as the Oxford Bible, and now used in the Anglican state-church, evoked a great protest from the true men of letters, the poets and critics who had found their inspirations in the useful study of the old version. The new version was the work of fourteen years; it was made by the united labour of the greatest scholars in the English-speaking world; and it is far the most exact translation that we have. Nevertheless the literary quality has been injured to such an extent that no one will ever turn to the new revision for poetical study. Even among the churches there was a decided condemnation of this scholarly treatment of the old text; and many of the churches refused to use the book. In this case, conservatism is doing the literary world a service, keeping the old King James version in circulation, and insisting especially upon its use in Sunday schools.

We may now take a few examples of the differences between the revised version and the Bible of King James. Professor Saintsbury, in an essay upon English prose, published some years ago, said that the most perfect piece of

English prose in the language was that comprised in the sixth and seventh verses of the eighth chapter of the Song of Songs:

> Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.
>
> Many waters can not quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned.

I should not like to say that the Professor is certainly right in calling this the finest prose in the English language; but he is a very great critic, whose opinion must be respected and considered, and the passage is certainly very fine. But in the revised version, how tame the same text has become in the hands of the scholarly translators!

> The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, a very flame of the Lord.

Now as a description of jealousy, not to speak of the literary execution at all, which is the best? What, we may ask, has been gained by calling jealousy "a flame of the Lord" or by substituting the word "flashes" for "coals of fire"? All through the new version are things of this kind. For example, in the same Song of Songs there is a beautiful description of eyes, like "doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set." By substituting "rivers" only for "rivers of waters" the text may have gained in exactness, but it has lost immeasurably, both in poetry and in sound. Far more poetical is the verse as given in the Douai version: "His eyes are as doves upon brooks of waters, which are washed with milk, and sit beside the beautiful streams."

It may even be said without any question that the mistakes of the old translators were often much more beautiful than the original. A splendid example is given in the verse of Job, chapter twenty-six, verse thirteen: "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the

crooked serpent." By the crooked serpent was supposed to be signified the grand constellation called *Draco*, or the Dragon. And the figure is sublime. It is still more sublime in the Douai translation. "His obstetric hand hath brought forth the Winding Serpent." This is certainly a grand imagination—the hand of God, like the hand of a midwife, bringing forth a constellation out of the womb of the eternal night. But in the revised version, which is exact, we have only "His hand hath pierced the Swift Serpent"! All the poetry is dead.

There are two methods for the literary study of any book—the first being the study of its thought and emotion; the second only that of its workmanship. A student of literature should study some of the Bible from both points of view. In attempting the former method he will do well to consider many works of criticism, but for the study of the text as literature, his duty is very plain—the King James version is the only one that ought to form the basis of his study, though he should look at the Douai version occasionally. Also he should have a book of references, such as Cruden's Concordance, by help of which he can collect together in a few moments all the texts upon any particular subject, such as the sea, the wind, the sky, human life, the shadows of evening. The study of the Bible is not one which I should recommend to very young Japanese students, because of the quaintness of the English. Before a good knowledge of English forms is obtained, the archaisms are apt to affect the students' mode of expression. But for the advanced student of literature, I should say that some knowledge of the finest books in the Bible is simply indispensable. The important books to read are not many. But one should read at least the books of Genesis, Exodus, Ruth, Esther, the Song of Songs, Proverbs,—and, above all, Job. Job is certainly the grandest book in the Bible; but all of those which I have named are books that have inspired poets and writers in all departments of English literature to such

an extent that you can scarcely read a masterpiece in which there is not some conscious or unconscious reference to them. Another book of philosophical importance is Ecclesiastes, where, in addition to much proverbial wisdom, you will find some admirable world-poetry—that is, poetry which contains universal truth about human life in all times and all ages. Of the historical books and the law books I do not think that it is important to read much; the literary element in these is not so pronounced. It is otherwise with the prophetic books, but here in order to obtain a few jewels of expression, you have to read a great deal that is of little value. Of the New Testament there is very little equal to the old in literary value; indeed, I should recommend the reading only of the closing book—the book called the Revelation, or the Apocalypse, from which we have derived a literary adjective "apocalyptic," to describe something at once very terrible and very grand. Whether one understands the meaning of this mysterious text makes very little difference; the sonority and the beauty of its sentences, together with the tremendous character of its imagery, can not but powerfully influence mind and ear, and thus stimulate literary taste. At least two of the great prose writers of the nineteenth century, Carlyle and Ruskin, have been vividly influenced by the book of the Revelation. Every period of English literature shows some influence of Bible study, even from the old Anglo-Saxon days; and during the present year, the study has so little slackened that one constantly sees announcements of new works upon the literary elements of the Bible. Perhaps one of the best is Professor Moulton's "Modern Reader's Bible," in which the literary side of the subject receives better consideration than in any other work of the kind published for general use.

If this brief lecture has shown the real place of the King James version in English literature, and suggested to you the reason why the book has an all-important value, independently of any religious thought in it,—quite sufficient

has been said. It would be of no use whatever to spend the time otherwise utilisable, in pointing out beauties of the text. What beauty there is is of a kind so simple that explanation is quite unnecessary. Where I think that the value of the reading would be greatest for you, is in regard to measure and symmetry and euphony in English construction. But that means a great deal—so much that the best illustration of it is the observation already made, that all English written since the sixteenth century has been coloured by the Bible.

CHAPTER IV

STUDIES OF EXTRAORDINARY PROSE

I

THE ART OF SIMPLE POWER: THE NORSE WRITERS

In speaking upon the various arts of prose, I do not intend to confine the study especially to something in English literature. For it happens that we can get better examples of the great art of prose writing in other literatures than English,—examples, too, which will better appeal to the Japanese student, especially as some of them bear resemblance to the best work of the old Japanese writers. In English literature it is not very easy to find examples of that simplicity, combined with great vividness, which is to be found in the old Japanese narrative. But we can find this very often in the work of the Norse writers; and their finest pages, translated into the kindred English tongue, do not lose the extraordinary charm of the original.

Now there are two ways of writing artistic prose (of course there are many different methods, but all can be grouped under two heads), both depending a good deal upon the character of the writer. There is a kind of work of which the merit is altogether due to vivid and powerful senses, well trained in observation. The man who sees keenly and hears keenly, who has been well disciplined how to use his eyes and ears both with quickness and caution, who has been taught by experience the value of accuracy and the danger of exaggeration (exaggeration being, after all, only an incorrect way of observing and thinking),—such a man, if he can write at all, is apt to write interestingly. The very best examples of strong simple prose are pages written by the old Norse men who passed most of

their lives in fighting and hunting. We have here the result of that training which I have above indicated. The man who knows that at any hour of the day a mistake may cost his life and the lives of his children, is apt to be a man of exact observation. He is also apt to be a man with excellent senses and good judgment; for the near-sighted or deaf or stupid could scarcely have existed in the sort of society to which the Norse writers belonged. And I imagine, so far as it is in my power to judge, that some of the old Japanese writers have given in their work evidence of the same faculties of perception and discrimination. To-day we have some living examples of European writers whose power depends entirely upon the same qualities. Modern writers of this kind are much less simple, it is true, than the writers whom we are about to consider; they have been educated in modern technical schools or universities, and their education has given to their work a certain colour never to be found in the ancient literature. But one or two writers have preserved in a most extraordinary way the best qualities of the old Norse writers,—modern Norsemen, or at least Scandinavians. I think that perhaps the best is Björnstjerne Björnson. We shall have occasion to speak of him again at another time.

The other method of writing artistic prose is more particularly subjective; it depends chiefly upon the man's inner sense of beauty,—upon his power to feel emotionally, and to express the emotion by a careful choice of words. Upon this phase of prose writing we need not now dwell; we shall take it up later on. Suffice to say that it does not at all depend upon the possession of well developed exterior senses, nor upon faculties of quick perception and discrimination; indeed, some of its greatest masters have been physically imperfect men, or helpless invalids.

Now let us take an example of the old Norse style of narrative. It dates back to the early part of the thirteenth century; and the subject is a fight in a little island on the

coast of Iceland. There was trouble at the time about a Christian bishop called Gudmund, who had been sent out there. Some determined to kill him, others resolved to stand by him,—and among the latter were two brave friends Eyjolf and Aron. The summary opens at the point where the bishop's party had been badly handled, and nearly everybody killed except the two friends. Aron, who was the weaker of the two, wanted to stay on the ground and fight until he died. Eyjolf was determined that he should not, so he played a trick upon him in order to save him. The whole story is told in the Sturlunga Saga. I hope you will be interested by this; because it seems to me remarkably like some incidents in old Japanese histories.

Eyjolf took his way to the place where Aron and Sturla had met, and there he found Aron sitting with his weapons, and all about were lying dead men, and wounded. Eyjolf asks his cousin whether he can move at all. Aron says that he can, and stands on his feet; and now they both go together for a while by the shore, till they come to a hidden bay;—there they saw a boat ready floating, with five or six men at the oars, and the bow to sea. This was Eyjolf's arrangement, in case of sudden need. Now Eyjolf tells Aron that he means the boat for both of them, giving out that he sees no hope of doing more for the Bishop at that time.

"But I look for better days to come," says Eyjolf.

"It seems a strange plan to me," says Aron; "for I thought that we should never part from Bishop Gudmund in this distress. There is something behind this, and I vow that I will not go, unless you go first on board."

"That I will not, Cousin," says Eyjolf, "for it is shoal water here, and I will not have any of the oarsmen leave his oar to shove her off; and it is far too much for you to go about with wounds like yours. You will have to go on board."

"Well, put your weapons in the boat," says Aron, "and I will believe you."

Aron now goes on board, and Eyjolf did as Aron asked him. Eyjolf waded after, pushing the boat, for the shallows went far out. And when he saw the right time come, Eyjolf caught up a battle-axe out of the stern of the boat, and gave a shove to the boat with all his might.

"Good-bye, Aron," says Eyjolf; "we shall meet again when God pleases."

And since Aron was disabled with wounds and weary with loss of blood, it had to be even so; and this parting was a grief to Aron, for they saw each other no more.

Now Eyjolf spoke to the oarsmen, and told them to row hard, and not to let Aron come back again to Grimsey that day, and not for many a day, if they could help it.

They row away with Aron in their boat; but Eyjolf turns to the shore again, and to a boat-house with a large ferry-boat in it that belonged to the goodman (farmer) Gnup. And at the same nick of time he sees the Sturlung company come tearing down from the garth, having finished their mischief there. Eyjolf takes to the boat-house, with his mind made up to defend it, as long as his doom would let him. There were double doors to the boat-house, and he puts heavy stones against them.

Brand, one of Siglwat's followers, a man of good condition, caught a glimpse of a man moving, and said to his companions that he thought he had made out Eyjolf Karrson there, and that they ought to go after him. Sturla was not on the spot. There were nine to ten together. So they come to the boat-house. Brand asks who is there, and Eyjolf says that it is he.

"Then you will please to come out, and come before Sturla," says Brand.

"Will you promise me grace?" says Eyjolf.

"There will be little of that," says Brand.

"Then it is for you to come on," says Eyjolf, "and for me to guard, and it seems to me the shares are ill divided."

Eyjolf had a coat of mail, and a great axe, and that was all.

Now they came at him, and he made a good and brave defence; he cut their pike-shafts through—there were stout blows on both sides. And in that bout Eyjolf broke his axe-haft, and caught up an oar, and then another, and both broke with his blows. And in the bout Eyjolf got a thrust under his arm, and it came home. Some say that he broke the shaft from the spearhead, and let it stay in the wound. He saw now that his defence was ended. Then he made a dash out, and got through them, before they knew. They were not expecting this; still, they kept their heads, and a man named Mar cut at him and caught his ankle, so that his foot hung crippled. With that he rolled down the beach and the sea was at the flood. In such plight as he was in, Eyjolf set to and swam, and swimming he came twelve fathoms from shore to a shelf of rock, and knelt there; and then he fell full length upon

the earth, and spread his hands from him, turning to the East, as if to pray.

Now they launched the boat and went after him. And when they came to the rock, a man drove a spearhead into him, and then another; but no blood flowed from either wound. So they turned to go ashore and find Sturla, and tell him the story plainly how it had all fallen out. Sturla held, and another man too, that this had been a glorious defence. He showed that he was pleased at the news.

Now, do you observe anything peculiar about this very humane document? I think you must appreciate the power of it; but I doubt whether you have noticed how very differently from modern methods that power has been employed.

In the first place, notice that there are scarcely any adjectives; altogether there are nine or ten—suppose we say ten. There are two and a half pages of about three hundred words in a page, in the extract which you have written. That is to say, there are about seven hundred and fifty words, and there are only ten adjectives in the whole—or about one adjective and a fraction to every hundred words. I think that you would have to look through thousands and thousands of modern English books before you could find anything like this. And there is no word used which could be left out, without somewhat spoiling the effect. This may not be grace; but it is certainly the economy of force, which is the basis of all grace.

Next, observe that there is no description—not a particle of description. Houses are mentioned and rocks and boats, and a fight is narrated in the most masterly way; yet nothing is described. And nevertheless how well we see everything —that cold bay of the North Sea with the boat floating upon it, and the brave man helping his wounded cousin on board, and the unequal struggle at the boat-house, during which we can actually hear the noise of the oars breaking. There is no picture of a face; yet I am quite sure that you can see the face of that brave man in every episode of the struggle. The Norse people were perhaps not the first to

discover that description was unnecessary in great writing. They loved it in their poetry; they avoided it in their prose. But it requires no little skill to neglect description in this way,—to make the actions and incidents themselves create the picture. At first reading this might seem to you simple as a schoolboy's composition; but there is nothing in the world so hard to do.

Thirdly, observe that there is no emotion, no partiality, no sympathy expressed. It is true that in one place Eyjolf is spoken of as having made "a good and brave defence," but the Norsemen never spoke badly of their enemies; and if their greatest enemy could fight well, they gave him credit for it, not as a matter of sympathy but as a matter of truth. Certainly the end of the narration shows us that the adjectives "good" and "brave" do not imply any sympathy at all; for the lord of the men who killed Eyjolf was pleased to hear of the strong fight that he made. Notice this point carefully. Such men found no pleasure in killing cowards; they thought it glorious only to kill a good fighter in a good fight. The lord is glad because his men killed somebody well worth killing. So, as I have already said, there is not one particle of personal emotion in the whole story. Nevertheless what emotion it makes within the reader! And what a wonderful art this is to create emotion in the reader's mind by suppressing it altogether in the narration! This is the supreme art of realism,—about which you may have heard a great deal in these last few years. I know of only one writer of the nineteenth century who had this same realistic power,—the late French story-teller de Maupassant. In the days before his brain weakened and madness destroyed his astonishing faculties, he also could create the most powerful emotion without the use of a single emotional word or suggestion. Some day I shall try to give you in English a short specimen of his power.

Now if you will consider these three things—the scarcity of adjectives, the absence of description, and the suppres-

sion of emotion, I think that you will be able to see what a wonderful bit of writing that was. But it is no more than a single example out of a possible hundred. And in a certain way the secret of it is the same which gave such surprise and delight in modern times to the readers of Hans Andersen. This matchless teller of fairy tales and "wonder-stories" full of deep philosophical meanings, was, as you know, a Norseman,—even by blood a descendant of those same men who could write about the story of Eyjolf in the thirteenth century. I want to give you now another little story of the same kind from the old Icelandic saga of Njal. You will discover all the same qualities in it. The story told might almost be Japanese,—an incident of the old fierce custom of vengeance. Among the Norsemen, as among the men of old Japan, the brother was bound to avenge the death of the brother; the father had to avenge his son; everybody killed had some blood relative to avenge him. If there was no man to do this, there would often appear a brave woman willing and capable of doing it, and in the wars of Katakiuchi there were many brave things done on both sides, even by the little boys and girls. In this case the victims are a little boy and his grandparents. They are locked in a wooden house that has been surrounded by their enemies and set on fire. There are many people in the house, and they all are about to be destroyed without pity,—for this is a fight between two clans, and there are many deaths to be avenged. But suddenly the leader of the conquering party remembers that the old man inside used to be his teacher (I think there is a Japanese incident of almost exactly the same kind in the story of a castle siege). Now we will make the old northern story-teller relate the rest.

Then Flosi went to the door, and called out to Njal, and said he would speak with him and Bergthord.

Now Njal does so, and Flosi said, "I will offer thee, master Njal, leave to go out; for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors."

"I will not go out," said Njal, "for I am an old man, and little fitted to avenge my sons; but I will not live in shame."

Then Flosi said to Bergthord: "Come thou out, housewife; for I will for no sake burn thee indoors."

"I was given away to Njal young," said Bergthord; "and I promised him this,—that we should both share the same fate."

After that they both went back into the house.

"What council shall we now take?" said Bergthord.

"We will go to our bed," says Njal, "and lay us down; I have long been eager for rest."

Then she said to the boy Thord, Kuri's son: "Thee will I take out, and thou shalt not burn in here."

"Thou hast promised me this, grandmother," says the boy, "that we should never part so long as I wished to be with thee; but methinks it is much better to die with thee and Njal than to live after you."

Then she bore the boy to her bed, and Njal spoke to his steward and said:

"Now thou shalt see where we lay us down,—for I mean not to stir an inch hence, whether reek or burning smart me, and so thou wilt be able to guess where to look for our bones."

He said that he would do so.

There had been an ox slaughtered, and the hide lay there. Njal told the steward to spread the hide over them, and he did so.

So there they lay down both of them in their bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the sign of the cross, and gave over their souls unto God's hand; and that was the last word that men heard them utter.

There are about four adjectives in all this; and, as in the former case, there is no description and no sympathy,—no sentiment. Very possibly this is an absolutely true incident, the steward, who was allowed to go out, having been afterward able to make a faithful report of what the old people and the boy said in the house. The young men said other things, full of fierce mockery,—things that manifest a spirit totally unlike anything in modern times. They stood up to be burned or to break their way out if a chance offered. One of the sons seeing the father lying down in the bed sarcastically observed, "Our father goes early to bed,—and that is what was to be looked for, as he is an old man."

This grewsome joke shows that the young man would have preferred the father to die fighting. But the old folks were busy enough in preparing the little boy for death. It is a terrible story,—an atrociously cruel one; but it shows great nobility of character in the victims, and the reader is moved in spite of himself by this most simple relation of fact.

Now perhaps you will think that this simple style can only produce such effects when the subject matter of the narrative is itself of a terrible or startling or extraordinary character. I am quite sure that this is not true, because I find exactly the same style in such a modern novel as "Synnövé Solbakken" by Björnson, and I find it in such fairy tales of Andersen as "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Little Mermaid." These simplest subjects are full of wonder and beauty for the eyes that can see and the mind that can think; and with such an eye and such a mind, the simple style is quite enough. How trifling at times are the subjects of Andersen's stories—a child's toy, a plant growing in the field, a snow image, made by children somewhat as we make a snow *daruma* in the farmyard, a rose-bush under the window. It would be nonsense to say that here the interest depends upon the subject matter! In such a story as "The Little Tin Soldier" we are really affected almost as much as by the story of Eyjolf in the old saga—simply because the old saga-teller and the modern story-teller wrote and thought very much in the same way. Or take another subject, of a more complicated character, the story of the "Nightingale of the Emperor of China and the Nightingale of the Emperor of Japan." There is a great deal more meaning here than the pretty narrative itself shows upon the surface. The whole idea is the history of our human life,—the life of the artist, and his inability to obtain just recognition, and the power of the humbug to ignore him. It is a very profound story indeed; and there are pages in it which one can scarcely read with dry eyes. It affects us both intellectually and emotionally to an extraordinary de-

gree; but the style is still the style of the old sagas. Of course I must acknowledge that Andersen uses a few more adjectives than the Icelandic writers did, but you will find, on examining him closely, that he does not use them when he can help it. Now the other style that I was telling you about,—the modern artistic style, uses adjectives almost as profusely as in poetry. I do not wish to speak badly of it; but scarcely any writer who uses it has been able to give so powerful an impression as the Norse writers who never used it at all.

In the simple style there is something of the genius of the race. After all, any great literary manner must have its foundation in race character. The manner that I have been describing is an evidence of northern race character at its very best. Quite incidentally I may observe here that another northern race, which has produced a literature only in very recent times, shows something of the same simple force of plain style,—I mean Russian literature. The great modern Russian writers, most of all, resemble the old Norse writers in their management of effects with few words. But my purpose in this lecture has been especially to suggest to you a possible resemblance between old Japanese literary methods and these old northern literary methods. I imagine that the northern simple art accords better with Japanese genius than ever could the more elaborate forms of literature, based upon the old classic studies.

II

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

In our first lecture on prose style you will recollect the extraordinary simplicity of the examples given from some of the old Norse writers. And you will have observed the lasting strength of that undecorated native simplicity. To-day I am going to talk to you about a style which offers the very greatest possible contrast and opposition to the style of the Norse writers,—a style which represents the extreme power of great classical culture, vast scholarship, enormous reading,—a style which can be enjoyed only by scholars, which never could become popular, and which nevertheless has wonderful merit in its way. I do not offer you examples with any idea of encouraging you to imitate it. But it is proper that you should be able to appreciate some of its fine qualities and to understand its great importance in the history of English literature. I mean the style of Sir Thomas Browne.

I have said that the influence of this style has been very great upon English literature. Before we go any further, allow me to explain this influence. Sir Thomas Browne was the first great English writer who made an original classic style. By classic style I mean an English prose style founded upon a profound study of the ancient classic writers, Greek and Latin, and largely coloured and made melodious by a skilful use of many-syllabled words derived from the antique tongues. There were original styles before. Sir Thomas Malory made a charming innovation in style. Lyly made a new style, too,—a style imitated from Spanish writers, extravagantly ornamented, extravagantly complicated, fantastic, artificial, tiresome,—the famous style called Euphuism. We shall have to speak of Euphu-

ism at another time. It also was a great influence during a short period. But neither the delightful prose poetry of Sir Thomas Malory nor the extravagant and factitious style of Lyly has anything in common with the style of Sir Thomas Browne. Sir Thomas Browne imitated nobody except the best Latin and Greek writers, and he imitated them with an art that no other Englishman ever approached. Moreover, he did not imitate them slavishly; he managed always to remain supremely original, and because he was a true prose poet, much more than because he imitated the beauties of the antique writers, he was able to influence English prose for considerably more than two hundred years. Indeed, I think we may say that his influence still continues; and that if he does not affect style to-day as markedly as he did a hundred years ago, it is only because one must be a very good scholar to do anything in the same direction as that followed by Sir Thomas Browne, and our very good scholars of to-day do not write very much in the way of essays or of poetry. The first person of great eminence powerfully affected by Sir Thomas Browne was Samuel Johnson. You know that Johnson affected the literature of the eighteenth century most powerfully, and even a good deal of the literature of the early nineteenth century. But Johnson was a pupil of Browne, and a rather clumsy pupil at that. He was not nearly so great a scholar as Sir Thomas Browne; he was much less broad-minded—that is to say, capable of liberal and generous tolerance, and he did not have that sense of beauty and of poetry which distinguished Sir Thomas Browne. He made only a very bad imitation of Sir Thomas, exaggerating the eccentricities and missing the rare and delicate beauties. But the literary links between Browne and the eighteenth century are very easily established, and it is certain that Browne indirectly helped to form the literary prose of that period. Thus you will perceive how large a figure in the history of English literature he must be.

He was born in 1605, and he died in 1682. Thus he belongs to the seventeenth century, and his long life extends from nearly the beginning to within a few years of the end. We do not know very much about him. He was educated at Oxford, and studied medicine. Then he established himself as a doctor in the English country town of Norwich, famous in nursery-rhyme as the town to which the man-in-the-moon asked his way. In the leisure hours of his professional life he composed, at long intervals, three small books, respectively entitled "Religio Medici," "Pseudodoxia," and "Hydriotaphia." Neither the first, which is a treatise upon humanism in its relation to life and religion, nor the second, which is a treatise upon vulgar errors, need occupy us much for the present; they do not reveal his style in the same way as the third book. This "Hydriotaphia" is a treatise upon urn-burial, upon the habit of the ancients of burying or preserving the ashes of their dead in urns of pottery or of metal. It is from this book that I am going to make some quotations. During Browne's lifetime he was recognised as a most wonderful scholar and amiable man, but there were only a few persons who could appreciate the finer beauties of his literary work. Being personally liked, however, he had no difficulty in making a social success; he was able to become tolerably rich, and he was created a knight by King Charles II. After his death his books and manuscript were sold at auction; and fortunately they were purchased afterwards for the British Museum. The whole of his work, including some posthumous essays, makes three volumes in the Bohn Library. Better editions of part of the text, however, have been recently produced; and others are in preparation. It is probable that Sir Thomas Browne will be studied very much again within the next fifty years.

The book about urn-burial really gives the student the best idea of Sir Thomas Browne. No other of his works so well displays his learning and his sense of poetry. In-

deed, even in these days of more advanced scholarship, the learning of Sir Thomas Browne astonishes the most learned. He quotes from a multitude of authors, scarcely known to the ordinary student, as well as from almost every classic author known; likewise from German, Italian, Spanish and Danish writers; likewise from hosts of the philosophers of the Middle Ages and the fathers of the church. Everything that had been written about science from antiquity up to the middle of the seventeenth century he would appear to have read,—botany, anatomy, medicine, alchemy, astrology; and the mere list of authorities cited by him is appalling. But to discover a man of the seventeenth century who had read all the books in the western world is a much less surprising fact than to find that the omnivorous reader remembered what he read, digested it, organised it, and everywhere discovered in it beauties that others had not noticed. Scholarship in itself is not, however, particularly interesting; and the charge of pedantry, of a needless display of learning, might have been brought against Sir Thomas Browne more than once. To-day, you know, it is considered a little vulgar for a good scholar to make quotations from Greek and Latin authors when writing an English book. He is at once accused of trying to show off his knowledge. But even to-day, and while this is the rule, no great critic will charge Sir Thomas Browne with pedantry. He quotes classical authors extensively only while he is writing upon classical subjects; and even then, he never quotes a name or a fact without producing some unexpected and surprising effect. Moreover, he very seldom cites a Latin or Greek text, but puts the Latin or Greek thought into English. Later on I shall try to show you what are the intrinsic demerits of his style, as well as its merits; but for the present let us study a few quotations. They will serve better than anything else to show what a curious writer he is.

In the little book about urn-burial, the first chapter treats

generally about the burial customs of all nations of antiquity—indeed I might say of all nations in the world, together with the philosophical or religious reasons for different burial customs; and yet in the original book all this is told in about twenty pages. You will see therefore that Sir Thomas is not prolix; on the contrary, he presses his facts together so powerfully as to make one solid composition of them. Let us take a few sentences from this chapter:

Some being of the opinion of Thales, that water was the original of all things, thought it most equal to submit unto the principle of putrefaction, and conclude in a moist relentment. Others conceived it most natural to end in fire, as due unto the master principle in the composition, according to the doctrine of Heraclitus; and therefore heaped up large piles, more actively to waft them toward that element, whereby they also declined a visible degeneration into worms, and left a lasting parcel of their composition. . . . But the Chaldeans, the great idolators of fire, abhorred the burning of their carcasses, as a pollution of that deity. The Persian magi declined it upon the like scruple, and being only solicitous about their bones, exposed their flesh to the prey of birds and dogs. And the Parsees now of India, which expose their bodies unto vultures, and endure not so much as *feretra* or biers of wood, the proper fuel of fire, are led on with such niceties. But whether the ancient Germans, who burned their dead, held any such fear to pollute their deity of Herthus, or the Earth, we have no authentic conjecture.

The Egyptians were afraid of fire, not as a deity, but a devouring element, mercilessly consuming their bodies, and leaving too little of them; and therefore by precious embalmments, depositure in dry earths, or handsome enclosure in glasses, contrived the notablest ways of integral conservation. And from such Egyptian scruples, embibed by Pythagoras, it may be conjectured that Numa and the Pythagorical sect first waved (modern *waived*) the fiery solution.

The Scythians, who swore by wind and sword, that is, by life and death, were so far from burning their bodies, that they declined all interment, and made their graves in the air; and the Icthyophagi, or fish-eating nations about Egypt, affected the sea for their grave; thereby declining visible corruption, and restoring the debt of their bodies. Whereas the old heroes, in Homer, dreaded

nothing more than water or drowning; probably upon the old opinion of the fiery substance of the soul, only extinguishable by that element; and therefore the poet emphatically implieth the total destruction in this kind of death, which happened to Ajax Oileus.

So on, page after page crammed with facts and comments. He mentions even the Chinese burial customs—so little known to Europeans of the seventeenth century; and his remarks upon them are tolerably correct, considering all the circumstances. You will acknowledge that a dry subject is here most interestingly treated; this is the art that can give life to old bones. But the main thing is the style,—remember we are still early in the seventeenth century, in the year 1658; see how dignified, how sonorous, how finely polished are these rolling sentences, all of which rise and fall with wave-like regularity and roundness. You feel that this is the scholar who writes,—the scholar whose ear has been trained to the long music of Greek and Latin sentences. And even when he uses words now obsolete or changed in meaning, you can generally know very well from the context what is meant. For instance, "relentment," which now has no such meaning, is used in the sense of dissolution, and "conclude," of which the meaning is now most commonly to finish in the literary sense, this old doctor uses in the meaning of to end life, to finish existence. But you do not need to look at the glossary at the end of the book in order to know this.

We might look to such a writer for all the arts of finished prose known to the best masters of to-day; and we should find them in the most elaborate perfection. The use of antithesis, long afterwards made so famous by Macaulay, was used by Browne with quite as much art, and perhaps, with even better taste. Certainly his similes are quite as startling:

Though the funeral pyre of Patroclus took up an hundred foot, a piece of an old boat burnt Pompey; and if the burthen of Isaac were sufficient for an holocaust, a man may carry his own pyre.

The subject is always made interesting, whether the writer be speaking of mathematics or of gardens, of graves or of stars. Hear him when he begins on the subject of ghosts—how curious the accumulation of facts, and how effective the contrasts:

> The dead seem all alive in the human Hades of Homer, yet cannot well speak, prophesy, or know the living, except they drink blood, wherein is the life of man. And therefore the souls of Penelope's paramours, conducted by Mercury, chirped like bats, and those which followed Hercules made a noise but like a flock of birds. . . . The departed spirits know things past and to come; yet are ignorant of things present. Agamemnon foretells what should happen to Ulysses; yet ignorantly enquires what has become of his own son. The ghosts are afraid of swords in Homer; yet Sibylla tells Æneas in Virgil, the thin habit of spirits was beyond the force of weapons. The spirits put off their malice with their bodies; and Cæsar and Pompey accord in Latin hell; yet Ajax, in Homer, endures not a conference with Ulysses; and Deiphobus appears all mangled in Virgil's ghosts, yet we meet with perfect shadows among the wounded ghosts of Homer.

But these examples do not show Browne at his very best; they merely serve to illustrate his ordinary style. To show him at his best through quotation is a very difficult thing, as Professor Saintsbury recently pointed out. His splendours are in rare sentences which somehow or other light up the whole page in which they occur. Every student should know the wonderful passage about the use of Egyptian mummies for medicine,—mummy-flesh being a drug known to English medicine up to the year 1721. I should like to read the whole passage to you in which this sentence occurs, but this would require too much time; suffice to quote the conclusion:

> Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

If Sir Thomas Browne had lived in modern times he might have added that mummies were used on the steamboats of the Nile instead of coal—even within our own day. The bodies of common people were preserved mostly by the use of cheap resinous substances, such as pitch; therefore, as soon as it was found by the steamboat companies that they would burn very well indeed, they were burned by tens of thousands to make steam! Also I suppose that you may have heard how mummy dust was sold for manure, until English laws were passed to prevent the custom. Sir Thomas Browne's object in these pages is only to point out the folly of funeral pomp, or of seeking to maintain a great fame among men after death, because all things are impermanent and pass away; and his illustrations are always strikingly forcible. On the subject of human impermanency the book is full of splendid sentences, many of which are worth learning by heart. But let us turn to a less sombre subject—to a beautiful paragraph in the fourth chapter of the "Garden of Cyrus":

> Light that makes things seen, makes some things invisible; were it not for darkness and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of the creation had remained unseen, and the stars in heaven as invisible as on the fourth day, when they were created above the horizon with the sun, or there was not an eye to behold them. The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by adumbration, and in the noblest part of Jewish types, we find the cherubims shadowing the mercy-seat. Life itself is but the shadow of death, and souls departed but the shadow of the living. All things fall under this name. The sun itself is but the dark *simulacrum*, and light but the shadow of God.

The little essay from which I have made this quotation, usually bound up with the work on urn-burial and called the "Garden of Cyrus" is a most curious thing. It is a dissertation upon the Quincunx, or, to use simpler language, a dissertation upon the mathematical, geometrical and mystical values of the number Five. The doctor, beginning his

subject with some remarks about the merit of arranging trees in a garden by groups of five, is led on to consider the signification of five in all its relations to the universe. He discourses upon that number in the heavens and upon the earth and even in the waters which are beneath the earth. He has remarked that not only in the human hand and foot do we find the divisons of five fingers and five toes, but we find like divisions in the limbs of countless animals and in the petals of flowers. He was very near a great discovery in these observations; you know that botany to-day recognises the meaning of fives and sixes in floral division; and you know that modern physiology has established beyond any question the fact that even in the hoofs of a horse or of a cow we have the rudiments of five toes that anciently existed. If the doctor had lived a little later—say in the time of that country doctor, Erasmus Darwin, he might have been able to forecast many discoveries of Charles Darwin. Anyhow, his little essay is delightful to read; and if he did not anticipate some general laws of modern science, he was none the less able to establish his declaration that "all things began in order, so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the ordainer of order and mystical mathematics of the city of heaven."

It would be wrong to call Sir Thomas Browne a mystic outside of the Christian sense. He was really a religious man, and he would not have ventured to put out theories which he believed the church would condemn. But no writer ever felt the poetry of mysticism more than he, or expressed its aspirations better without actually sharing them. Therefore his books have been classed with mystical literature, and are much admired and studied by mystics. It is impossible to read him and not be occasionally astonished by suggestions and thoughts that seem much too large for orthodox Christianity, but which would excellently illustrate the teaching of older eastern religions.

I shall be glad if these notes upon Sir Thomas Browne should serve to interest you in some of his best writings. But I think that his value for you will be chiefly in the suggestive direction. He is a great teacher in certain arts of style—in the art of contrast, in the art of compression, in the art of rhythm, and of melody. I do not think that you could, however, learn the latter from him. What you would learn would be the value of contrasts of metaphor, and of a certain fine economy of words; the rest is altogether too classical for you to apprehend the secret of it. Indeed, it is only a Greek and Latin training that can give full apprehension of what the beauties of his style are. But, like all true style, there is much there that means only character, personality,—the charm of the man himself, the grace of his mind; and all that, you can very well understand. I think you could scarcely read the book and not feel strange retrospective affection for the man who wrote it.

Now the great thing for you to remember about his place in English literature is that he was the father and founder of English classic prose. He was the source from which Dr. Johnson obtained inspiration; he was the first also to show those capacities of majesty and sonority in English prose which Gibbon afterwards displayed on so vast a scale; he was also the first to use effectively that art of contrast and of antithesis which was to make so great a part of the wonderful style of Macaulay. And even to-day no student can read Sir Thomas Browne without some profit. He is incomparably superior to Bacon and to not a few others who are much more widely known. I do not think that the study of Bacon's essays can be at all profitable to the student in the matter of style—rather the reverse. The value of Bacon is chiefly in his thinking. But Sir Thomas Browne offers you both thoughts and style in the very finest form.

Nevertheless I must utter a final word of disfavour. There is one drawback to all such style as that which we

have been considering—not excepting the styles of Gibbon or Macaulay. It is the necessarily limited range of their power. You can not appeal to the largest possible audience with a scholarly style. And what is worse, every such style, being artificial more than natural, contains within itself certain elements of corruption and dissolution. We have to read Sir Thomas Browne with a glossary to-day—that is, if we wish to be very exact in our renderings of his thoughts; you will find an extensive glossary attached to his work. This you will not find in Gibbon or Macaulay, but this is only because they are still near to us in time. For all that, the language of the former is now found to be decidedly old-fashioned, notwithstanding its beauty; and the study of the latter will probably become old-fashioned during the present century. It is quite otherwise in the case of that simple northern style, of which I gave you specimens in a former lecture. That never can become old-fashioned, even though the language die in which it was originally written. Containing nothing artificial, it also contains no element of decay. It can impress equally well the most learned and the most ignorant minds, and if we have to make a choice at all between their perfectly plain style and the gorgeous music and colours of Sir Thomas Browne, I should not hesitate for a moment to tell you that the simple style is much the better. However, that is not a reason for refusing to give to the classic writers the praise and admiration which they have so justly earned.

III

BJÖRNSON

BEFORE studying some further wonderful prose I want to speak to you about what I believe to be a wide-spread and very harmful delusion in Japan. I mean the delusion that students of English literature ought to study in English only the books originally written in English,—not English translations from other languages. Of course, in these times, I acknowledge that there is some reason for distrust of translations. Translations are made very quickly and very badly, only for the purpose of gaining money, and a vast amount of modern translation is absolute trash, but it is very different in the case of foreign works which have been long adopted into the English language, and which have become practically a common possession of Englishmen,—such as the translation of the "Arabian Nights," the grand prose translation of Goethe's "Faust," the translation of "Wilhelm Meister" by Carlyle, the translation of "Undine" which every boy reads, to mention only a few things at random. So with the translations of the great Italian and Spanish and Russian writers,—not to speak of French writers. In fact, if Englishmen had studied only English literature, English literature would never have become developed as it is now. And if Englishmen had studied foreign literature only in the original tongue, English literature would still have made very little progress. It has been through thousands of translations, not through scholarly study, that the best of our poetry, the best of our fiction, the best of our prose has been modified and improved by foreign influence. As I once before told you, the development of literature is only in a very limited degree the work of the scholars. The great scholars are seldom producers

of enduring literature. The men who make that must be men of natural genius, which has nothing to do with scholarship; and the majority of them are not, as a rule, even educated beyond the ordinary. To furnish these men with the stimulus of exotic ideas, those ideas should be placed before them in their own tongue. Now it may seem to you very strange that foreign influence should operate chiefly through translations, but the history of nearly every European literature proves that such is the case. And I am quite sure that if Japan is to produce an extensive new literature in the future, it will not be until after fresh ideas have become widely assimilated by the nation through thousands of translations. For these reasons, I think it is a very unfortunate notion that the study of English literature should be confined to the study of books originally written in English, or even written by Englishmen.

How is the mind of the English boy formed? If you think about that, you will discover that English literature really represents but a part and a small part of world influences on him. After the age of the nursery songs, most of which are really of English origin, comes the age of fairy tales, of which very few can be traced to English sources. Indeed I believe that "Jack the Giant Killer" and "Jack and the Beanstalk" are quite exceptional in the fact that they are truly English. "Puss in Boots" is not English, but French; "Cinderella" is French; "The Sleeping Beauty" is French; "The White Cat" is French; and "Bluebeard" is French. In fact the great mass of our fairy tales are translations from French authors such as Perrault and Madame d'Aulnoy, to mention only two. When the little boy has feasted himself to repletion upon this imaginative diet, what is the next course of reading? Other fairy tales, of a deeper character—half pure story, half moral teaching; and where do these stories come from? Well, they are not English at all; they are translations from other languages, chiefly German and Swedish. The most important of all

works of this kind are those of Hans Andersen. Every child must read them and learn from them, and they have now become so much a part of English child life that we can not help wondering what children did before Andersen was born. The best German work of this sort is the work of Grimm. Everybody knows something about that. After this reading, stories of adventure are generally taken up, or slight romances of some kind. There is "Robinson Crusoe," of course, which is English, and "Gulliver's Travels"; but excepting these two, I believe that most of the first class of juvenile romance consists of translations. For example, in my boyhood the romances of Henry Conscience were read by all boys; and they are translated from the Dutch. And even when a lad has come to delight in Sir Walter Scott, he has still foreign literary influences of even greater power working upon his imagination—such as the magic of the elder Alexandre Dumas. The wonderful stories of "Monte Cristo" and of "The Three Musketeers" have become indispensable reading for the young, and their influence upon modern English fiction has been very great. Still later one has to read the extraordinary novels of Victor Hugo; and there is no time at which the English student is not directly or indirectly affected by French masters as well as by the German masters. Of course you will say that I am mentioning modern authors when I speak of Dumas and Hugo. Yes, they are even contemporaries. But when we look back to the times before these great men were heard of, we still find that foreign literature influenced Elizabethans quite as much as contemporary English literature. In the eighteenth century the influence was French, and other foreign influences were at work. Then everybody had to read the classic French authors, but even these were not dull; there were story-tellers among them who supplied what the authors of the romantic time supplied to the English youth of the nineteenth century. Also in the seventeenth century there was some French influence,

mixed with Italian and Spanish. In the Elizabethan Age, education was not so widely diffused, but we know that the young people of those times used to read Spanish novels and stories, and that no less than one hundred and seventy Spanish books were then translated.

I think you will see from all this that English literature actually depends for its vitality upon translations, and that the minds of English youth are by no means formed through purely English influences. Observe that I have not said anything about the study of Greek and Latin, which are more than foreign influences; they are actually influences from another vanished world. Nor have I said anything about the influence of religious literature, vast as it is—Hebrew literature, literature of the Bible, on which are based the prayers that children learn at their mother's knee. Really, instead of being the principal factor in English education, English literature occupies quite a small place. If an Englishman only knew English literature, he would know very little indeed. The best of his literature may be in English; he has Shakespeare, for example; but the greater part of it is certainly not English, and even to-day its yearly production is being more and more affected by the ideas of France and Italy and Russia and Sweden and Norway—without mentioning the new influences from many Oriental countries.

No: you should think of any foreign language that you are able to acquire, not as the medium for expressing only the thoughts of one people, but as a medium through which you can obtain the best thought of the world. If you can not read Russian, why not read the Russian novelists in English or French? Perhaps you can not read Italian or Spanish; but that is no reason why you should not know the poems of Petrarch and Ariosto, or the dramas of Calderon. If you do not know Portuguese, there is a good English translation of Camoens. I suppose that in Tokyo very few persons know Finnish; but the wonderful epic of

"Kalevala" can be read to-day in English, French and in German. It is not necessary to have studied Sanskrit in order to know the gigantic epics of India; there are many European translations of the "Mahabharata" and "Ramayana"—indeed, there are English and French translations of most of the great Sanskrit writers, though the Germans have been perhaps the greatest workers in this field. You can read the Arabian and the Persian poets also in English; and there are Oriental classics that everybody should know something about—such as the "Shah-Nameh," or "Book of Kings" of Firdusi; "The Gulistan" of Saadi; and the "Divan" of Hafiz. And speaking of English translations only, both the written and the unwritten literatures of almost every people under the sun can be read in English—even the songs and the proverbs of the most savage tribes. There is one great defect in English work of this kind,—a great deal of such translation has been made in bad verse. For this reason the French translators who keep to prose are generally to be preferred. But you have certainly learned how great some English translators have proved themselves, even in verse,—for example, Fitzgerald; and scarcely less interesting and sympathetic than Fitzgerald is Palmer's volume of translation from the ancient Arabian poets. However, what I am anxious to impress upon you is this,—that the English language can give you not only some knowledge of the productions of one race, but the intellectual wealth of the entire world. In England there are many thousands of persons who can not read German, but there are no educated persons who have not read the German poets in English, and who can not quote to you some verses of Heine.

Now if you are satisfied that the study of English means for you infinitely more than the study of English authors, you will know why I am not attempting to confine these lectures to original English prose. I shall take only the best examples that I can find in any kind of European prose for illustration; because everything depends upon the idea and

the form, and neither the idea nor the form of prose (it is not the same in the case of poetry) can be restricted by the boundaries of language. In the last two lectures of this series I gave you two extremely different examples of style—one representing the old Norse or saga style; the other the elaborate, fantastic, almost pedantic, but matchlessly beautiful prose of Sir Thomas Browne. Both of these refer to the past; and the contrast was about as strong as it could be made. Now let us turn to modern times, to the nineteenth century, and again take two striking examples of the most simple and the most ornamental varieties of prose. The simple style will again be Norse; for the genius of the race, which showed itself so markedly in those quotations from the sagas which I gave you, again shows itself to-day in the nineteenth century prose of the very same people. Let us now talk about that.

You must not suppose that Norse literature remained unaffected by change through all the centuries—I am not speaking of language (that is not at all the same), but of method. On the contrary, the Norwegians and Swedes and Danes went through very much the same kind of literary experiences as the English and the French, the Italians and the Germans. They had also their romantic and classic periods; even they became for a while artificial, especially the Danes; and the Danish culture remained very conservative in its classicism until well into the nineteenth century. And at that time it was Danish culture that especially affected education in Norway and Sweden. But in 1832 there was born a man destined to revive the ancient saga literature in modern times, and so make a new literature unlike anything that had been before it. That man was Björnstjerne Björnson. He went through the usual course of university education, and did not prove himself a good scholar. He was always dreaming about other things than Greek or Latin or mathematics, and instead of trying to compete for any university honours, he gave all his spare

time to the reading of books having nothing to do with the university course. The ancient Norse literature especially interested him; he read everything relating to it that he could lay hands upon. He had hard work to pass his examinations, and his fellow-students never imagined that he would be able to do anything great in the world. But presently, after leaving the university, this dreaming young man suddenly developed an immense amount of unsuspected intellectual energy. He became a journalist, which, of all professions, is the worst for a man of letters to undertake; and in spite of it he produced a wonderful novel, within quite a short time, which attracted the attention of all Europe and has been translated into most European languages. This novel was "Synnövé Solbakken," a story of Norwegian peasant life. Björnson himself was a peasant's son, and he had lived and seen that which he described in this novel. But the wonder of the book was not in the story, not in the plot; it was in the astonishing method of the telling. The book reads as if it had been written by a saga man of the ninth or tenth century; the life described is indeed modern, but the art of telling it is an art a thousand years old, which scholars imagined could never be revived again. Björnson revived it; and by so doing he has affected almost every literature in Europe. Perhaps he has especially affected some of the great French realists; at all events, he gave everybody interested in literature something new to think about. But this first novel was only the beginning of a surprising series of productions,—poetical, romantic, historical and political. Björnson went into politics, became a statesman, did honour to his country, did a great many wonderful things. But his chief merit is that he is the father and founder of a new literature, which we may call modern Norse. The study of the modern Norse writers ought to be of great service to Japanese students, for this strong and simple style accords remarkably well with the best traditions of Japanese prose. Moreover, the

works of these writers have been put into English by scholarly men—masters of clear and pure English, who have been able to preserve the values of the original. This is easy to do in the case of the Northern dialects proper, which are very close to English—much closer than French, much closer even than German. The simpler the style, the less it loses by translation.

Moreover, you will find in the work of this man the most perfect pictures possible to make of the society and the character of a people. The people ought to interest you—ought to interest any student of English literature; for it was out of this far north that came the best element in the English race, the strongest and a good deal of the best feeling that expresses itself in English literature. You will find in these stories, or studies from real life, that the race has remained very much the same from ancient times. It is true that to-day in all the schools of Norway the students learn English and French; that modern science and modern philosophy are most diligently acquired; that Norway has produced poets, dramatists, men of science, and men of art, well worthy of being compared with those of almost any other country. It is true that writers like Björnson and Ibsen (the only other Norwegian man of letters of to-day who can be compared with Björnson) have been actually able to influence English literature and European drama in general. But it is not in the cities nor in the most highly cultivated classes that the national distinctiveness in the character of a people can be judged. You must go into the country to study that; you must know the peasantry, who really form the body and strength of any nation. Björnson well knew this; and his university training did not blind him to the literary importance of such studies. The best of his fiction, and the bulk of it, treats of peasant life; and this life he portrayed in a way that has no parallel in European literature with the possible exception of the Russian work done by Turgueniev and others. He has also

given us studies of Norwegian character among the middle class, among the clergymen, and among the highly cultivated university people, who discuss the philosophy of Spencer and the ethics of Kant. But these studies are interesting only to the degree that they show the real Norse character, such as the peasant best exemplifies, in spite of modern education. It is a very stern, strong and terrible character; but it is also both lovable and admirable. Brutal at moments, it is the most formidable temperament that we can imagine; but in steadfastness and affection and depth of emotional power, it is very grand. At first you will think that these terrible fathers who beat their children, and these terrible young men who fight with demons on occasion, or who climb precipices to court the maiden of their choice, are still savage. But after the shock of the strange has passed, you will see that they are after all very human and very affectionate; and that if they are rougher than we in their ways, it is because they are stronger and better able to endure and to benefit by pain. Well, as I said, every kind of northern society is depicted in Björnson's tales, but the greatest of all is the story of "Synnövé Solbakken." It is a very simple story of peasant life. It describes the lives of a boy and girl in the country up to the time of their marriage to each other, and it treats especially of the inner life of these two—their thoughts, their troubles, their affections. There is nothing unusual about it except the truth of the delineation. This delineation is done very much as the old Norse writers of whom I spoke to you before would have done it.

I shall quote only a little bit,—because the ancient extracts which I gave you from the saga must have served to show you what I mean. The scene described is that where the boy is taken to church for the first time, and there sees a little girl whom he is to marry many years later.

There was a little girl kneeling on the bench, and looking over the railing. She was still fairer than the man—so fair that he

had never seen her equal. She had a red streamer to her cap, and yellow hair beneath this, and she smiled at him—so that for a long time he could not see anything but her white teeth. She held a hymn-book in one hand, and a folded handkerchief in the other, and was now amusing herself by striking the handkerchief on the hymn-book. The more he stared the more she smiled; and now he chose also to kneel on the bench just as she was doing. Then she nodded. He looked gravely at her a moment; then he nodded. She smiled and nodded once more; he nodded again, and once more, and still once more. She smiled, but did not nod any more for a little while, until he had quite forgotten; then she nodded.

No more natural description was ever given of the manner in which two little children, still untrained, act upon seeing each other for the first time, without being able to get close enough to talk. They tried to talk by nods and smiles, when they like each other's looks. There is a very fine study of conversation when these two do come together —the random conversation of children, full of affection, also full of innocent vanity and innocent desire to please. But before they come together the little boy has a fight with another little boy, which is also admirably told. You feel that the writer of the book must have had this fight himself. Later on the hero is to have a very terrible fight, with a jealous and powerful man—a fight that almost takes the reader's breath away; and this is told just as a saga man would have told it a thousand years ago. I am not going to attempt to quote it now, for it is too long; and one part can not be extracted from the rest without injuring the effect of the whole. But some day when you read it, please to notice that quality in it by which northern writers surpass all others—I mean exactness in relating the succession of incidents. This is a quality to which Professor Ker has but lately called attention. I told you, when we were talking about the sagas, that I believed the style of these men depended upon the perfection of their senses—quickness of eye, accuracy of perception; and what Professor Ker has said in his lectures upon this very style would seem to

confirm this. For example, he remarks that a writer of to-day might write in English such a statement as "he felt the king come behind him and put both hands over his eyes." Professor Ker observes that a Norseman never could have written such a statement, because it is inaccurate in regard to the succession of incidents. The Norse writer would have said, "he felt some one touching him from behind; and before he could turn his head to look, a hand was placed over his eyes; and he knew, by the ring upon the hand, that it was the king." That is the proper way to relate the fact accurately. He could not know, when he first felt himself touched behind, that the king was touching him, nor could he know that the king's hands were placed before his eyes, until he saw something about or upon the hands, by which he could identify them. Seeing the king's ring upon a finger of the hand, he knew that he was being held by the king. In reality all this would happen in a second, and modern writers are not in the habit of studying the succession of the events within so short a time as a second. But the Norseman was obliged to do so; if he could not measure with his eye what took place within even the fraction of a second, he might lose his life at any moment. Now you will find in the description of this fight in "Synnövé Solbakken" exactly the same faultless accuracy as to succession of incidents. One man is drunk, and undertakes to fight because he is drunk; the other man, who is sober, does not wish to fight, nevertheless the fight is forced upon him by a succession of little circumstances, all of which could not have occupied more than five or ten minutes. An English story-writer of to-day would probably have compressed that ten minutes into two lines of prose. But Björnson gives three pages to those ten minutes, and by so doing he thrills you with all the excitement and passion of the moment as no English writer can do. Still, you must not think that he is prolix. Really he never describes anything which is not absolutely necessary. But he knows what is necessary much

better than other writers. He does not avoid little details because they happen to be very difficult to recount. If any of you have been forced into a quarrel of a dangerous kind, I am sure you will remember that all the little details of those moments before the quarrel, although not remarked perhaps by others present, were extremely clear to your own perception. Danger sharpens the senses, quite independently of the fact that the person is brave or not brave. At any such time you can hear and you can see better than at ordinary times. Björnson knew this. That is what makes his account of the fight between two peasants one of the greatest things in modern fiction.

Now I want to interest you in Björnson as the founder of a school,—to make you remember his name, to tempt you to read his wonderful story. But I shall not talk more about him now. Enough to say that he has done in Norway what I hope some future Japanese writer will do in Japan. You know what I mean by Norse style both in ancient ages and in our own day—that is, you must be able after these lectures to have a general idea about it. And now for a contrast. Nothing is more strongly contrasted with this sharply cut hard short style of the Norse than the prose of the modern romantic movement. The romantic movement in prose did not reach its greatest height in England. The English language is not perfect enough in its prose form for the supreme possibilities of prose. It was in France that romantic prose became most highly perfected; there were so many masters of style that it is hard to make choice among them. But only one conceived the idea of what we call poetical prose—that was Baudelaire; he was, you know, a great and strange poet who wrote a volume of splendid but very terrible verse called "Les Fleurs de Mal," or "Flowers of Evil"—perhaps "venomous or poisonous flowers" would better express the real meaning of the title. He also translated the stories of Poe into French; and he was in all things an exquisite artist.

IV.

BAUDELAIRE

BAUDELAIRE believed that prose could be made quite as poetical as verse or even more so, for a prose that could preserve the rhythm of poetry without its monotony, and the melody of poetry without rhythm, might become in the hands of the master even more effective than verse. I do not know whether this is really true. I am inclined to think that it is; but I do not feel sufficiently learned in certain matters related to the question to venture a definite opinion. Enough to say that Baudelaire thought it possible, and he tried to make a new kind of prose; and the book containing these attempts entitled "Little Poems in Prose" is a wonderful treasure. But Baudelaire did not say anything very extravagantly in its preface. He only expressed the conviction that a poetical prose might be used with good effects for certain particular subjects,—dreams, reveries, the thoughts that men think in solitude, when the life of the world is not about them to disturb their meditations; his prose essays are all reveries, dreams, fantasies. I want to give you a specimen of one of these; and I am going to choose that one which Professor Saintsbury selected as the best. But let me tell you in advance that the English language can not reproduce the real values of Baudelaire's prose. I am not going to attempt an artistic translation for you, but only such a translation as may help to show you in a vague way what poetical prose means. The piece I am going to turn into English is called "Les Bienfaits de la Lune,"—that is to say, freely rendered, the Gifts of the Moon,—the word "Bienfaits" (literally, benefit) being here used in the meaning of the present or gift given to a child by a fairy god-mother.

The Moon, who is caprice itself, looked through the window while thou wert sleeping in thy cradle, and exclaimed: "That child pleases me!" And she softly descended her stairway of clouds, and passed without sound through the panes of glass; then she stretched herself above thee, with a mother's supple tenderness, and she put her own colours upon thy face. Wherefore thine eyes have always remained green and thy cheeks extraordinarily pale. It was while contemplating this visitor that thine eyes first became so fantastically large; and she compressed thy throat so tenderly that since that time thou hast always felt a constant desire to weep.

Meanwhile, in the expansion of her joy, the Moon filled the whole room, like a phosphoric atmosphere, like a luminous poison; and all that living light thought and spoke: "Thou shalt eternally endure the influence of my kiss; thou shalt be beautiful after my fashion; thou shalt love all I love, and all that loves me—water, the clouds, the silence, and the night; the waters formless and multiform; the place where thou shalt never be; the lover thou shalt never know; monstrous flowers; the perfumes that give delirium; the cats that stretch themselves upon pianos, and moan like women, with a hoarse sweet voice.

And thou shalt be loved by my lovers, courted by my courtiers. Thou shalt be the queen of green-eyed men, whose throats I have also pressed in my nocturnal caress,—those who love the sea, the immense, tumultuous green sea-water, formless and multiform, the place in which they are not, the woman they know not, the sinister flowers that resemble the censors of some unknown religion, the perfumes that confuse the will, the wild and voluptuous animals that are the emblems of their madness.

Of course in the French this is incomparably more musical and more strange. You will see that it has the qualities of poetry, although not poetry; it has the same resonance, the same groupings of vowel sounds, the same alliteration, the same cadences. It is very strange, and it is also really beautiful. Probably Baudelaire's poetical prose is the most perfect attempt of the kind ever made; and there is a good deal of it. But being a very great artist, he saw, as I have told you before, that this kind of prose is suitable only for reveries, dreams, philosophical fancies. And thereby comes the question as to whether a book of that kind should be written only in one style.

Now this may seem to you a queer question, but I think that it is a very important one. The French have solved it; the English have not. Everything depends upon the character of the book. If the book be composed of different kinds of material, it seems to me quite proper that it should be written in different styles to suit the differences of subjects. You can not do this, however, except in a book which is a miscellany, a mixture of reflection and fact. Combinations of the latter kind are chiefly possible in works of travel. In a book of travel you can not keep up the tone of poetical prose while describing simple facts; but when you come to reflect upon the facts, you can then vary the style. French books of travel are much superior to English in point of literary execution, because the writers of them do this. They do it so naturally that you are apt to overlook the fact that there are two styles in the same book. I know of only one really great English book of travel which has the charm of poetical prose,—that is the "Eothen" of Kinglake. But in this case the entire book is written in one dream tone. The author has not attempted to deal with details to any extent. Beautiful as the book is, it does not show the versatility which French writers of equal ability often display. While on this subject, it occurs to me to show you an example of the difference in English and French methods, as shown by two contemporary writers in describing Tokyo. The English writer is Kipling. He is certainly the most talented English writer now living in descriptive and narrative work. The greatest living prose writer among the French is Pierre Loti (Julien Viaud), a French naval officer, and you know a member of the Academy. I hope that you have not been prejudiced against him by the stupid criticisms of very shallow men; and that you do not make the mistake of blaming the writer for certain observations regarding Japan, which were made during a stay of only some weeks in this country. Although he was here only for some weeks, and

could only describe exactly what he saw, knowing nothing about Japan except through his eyes, yet his sketches of Japan are incomparably finer and truer than anything which has been done by any other living writer. His comments, his inferences may be entirely wrong (they often are); but that has nothing really to do with the merit of his descriptions. When he describes exactly what he sees, then he is like a wonderful magician. There is nobody else living who could do the same thing. I suppose you know that his reputation does not depend upon his Japanese work, however, but upon some twenty volumes of travel containing the finest prose that has ever been written. However, let us first take a few lines from the English traveller's letter. It is very simply phrased, and yet very effective.

Some folks say that Tokyo covers an area equal to London. Some folks say that it is not more than ten miles long and eight miles broad. There are a good many ways of solving the question. I found a tea-garden situated on a green plateau far up a flight of steps, with pretty girls smiling on every step. From this elevation I looked forth over the city, and it stretched away from the sea, as far as the eye could reach—one grey expanse of packed house-roof, the perspective marked by numberless factory chimneys. Then I went several miles away and found a park, another eminence, and some more tea-girls prettier than the last; and, looking again, the city stretched out in a new direction as far as the eye could reach. Taking the scope of an eye on a clear day at eighteen miles, I make Tokyo thirty-six miles long by thirty-six miles broad exactly; and there may be some more which I missed. The place roared with life through all its quarters.

Here is the work of a practical man with a practical eye—interested in facts above all things, though not indifferent at any time to what is beautiful. Now, anybody who reads that paragraph will have an idea of the size of Tokyo such as pages of description could not give. There is only one half line of description to note, but it is very strong; and the use of house-roof in the singular gives a particular force to it. That is quite enough to satisfy the average

mind. But the Frenchman is an infinitely finer artist. He also gives you a description of Tokyo seen as a wilderness of roofs; but he first chooses a beautiful place from which to look and a beautiful time of the day in which to see it. Let me translate a few sentences for you:

Uyeno,—a very large park, wide avenues, well gravelled,—bordered with magnificent old trees, and tufts of bamboos.

I halt upon an elevation at a point overlooking the Lotos-lake, which reflects the evening, like a slightly tarnished mirror, all the gold of sunset. Yedo is beyond those still waters; Yedo is over there, half-lost in the reddish mist of the Autumn evening; a myriad of infinite little greyish roofs all alike,—the furthest, almost indistinguishable in the vague horizon, giving nevertheless an impression that that is not all,—that there are more of them, much more, in distances beyond the view. You can distinguish, amidst the uniformity of the low small houses, certain larger buildings with the angles of their roofs turned up. These are the temples. If it were not for them, you might imagine that you were looking at almost any great city quite as well as you could imagine that you were looking at Yedo. Indeed, it requires the effects of distance and of a particular light to make Yedo appear charming; at this moment, for example, I must confess that it is exquisite to see.

It is dimly outlined in the faintest colours; it has the look of not really existing,—of being only a mirage. Then it seems as if long bands of pink cotton were slowly unrolling over the world,—drawing this chimerical city in their soft undulations. Now one can no longer distinguish the interval between the lake and the further high land upon which all those myriads of far-away shapes are built. One even doubts whether that really is a lake, or only a very smooth level, reflecting the diffused light of the sky, or simply a stretch of vapour; nevertheless, some few long rosy gleams, still showing upon the surface, almost suffice to assure you that it is really water, and that Lotos-beds here and there make black patches against the reflecting surface.

Although this rapid translation does not give you the colour and charm of the original French, you must be able to see even through it how very accurate and fine the description is—an effect of evening sunlight and rosy mist.

I think that most of you have enjoyed the same view, and have noticed how black the lotos leaves really do seem, when the surface of the water is turned to gold by sunset. And then the description of the coming of the mists like long cloud bands of pink cotton is surely as beautiful as it is true. That is the way that a Japanese painter would paint a picture of Tokyo as seen from the same place at the same time. The Englishman would not have noticed all those delicate and dreamy colours, or if he did, would not trouble himself to try to paint them. Really it is a most difficult thing to do.

Now after this little digression let me come back to the subject of variety in style. Loti knows the art of it; so does many another French writer; but very few Englishmen do. What I am going to say is this, that an author ought to be able to choose a different style for different kinds of work,—that is, a great author. But it is so much trouble to master even one style perfectly well, that very few authors attempt this. However, I think it can be laid down as a true axiom that the style ought to vary with the subject in certain cases; and I think that the great writers of the future will so vary it. The poetical prose, of which I gave you an example from Loti, is admirably suited for particular kinds of composition—short and dreamy things. It is very exhausting to write much in such a style; it is quite as much labour as to write the same thing in verse. But a whole book upon one subject could not be written in this way. The simple naked style, on the other hand, is particularly adapted to story telling, to narrative, even to certain forms of history. The rhetorical style, ornamental without being exactly poetical, has also a special value; it is in such a style that logical argument and philosophical work in the form of essays can perhaps be most effectively presented. I think that some day this will be generally done. But once it becomes a fashion to do it, there will be danger ahead,—the danger of the custom hardening into

conventionalism. Conventionalism kills style. The best way, I think, to meet the difficulty suggested will be to persuade oneself that sentiment, artistic feeling, absolute sincerity of the emotion and of the thought will guide the writer better than any rules as to what style ought to be used. If you try to imitate a model, you will probably go wrong. All literary imitation means weakness. But if you simply follow your own feeling and tastes, trying to be true to them, and to develop them as much as you can—then I think that your style will form itself and will naturally, without direction, take at last the particular form and tone best adapted to the subject.

CHAPTER V

THE VALUE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN FICTION

THE subject of this lecture is much more serious than may appear to you from this title. Young men of your age are not likely to believe in ghosts, nor inclined to consider the subject as worthy of attention. The first things necessary to understand are the philosophical and literary relations of the topic. Let me tell you that it would be a mistake to suppose that the stories of the supernatural have had their day in fine literature. On the contrary, wherever fine literature is being produced, either in poetry or in prose, you will find the supernatural element very much alive. Scientific knowledge has not at all diminished the pleasure of mankind in this field of imagination, though it may have considerably changed the methods of treatment. The success of writers of to-day like Maeterlinck is chiefly explained by their skill in the treatment of the ghostly, and of subjects related to supernatural fear. But without citing other living writers, let me observe that there is scarcely any really great author in European literature, old or new, who has not distinguished himself in the treatment of the supernatural. In English literature, I believe there is no exception—even from the time of the Anglo-Saxon poets to Shakespeare, and from Shakespeare to our own day. And this introduces us to the consideration of a general and remarkable fact, a fact that I do not remember to have seen in any books, but which is of very great philosophical importance; there is something ghostly in all great art, whether of literature, music, sculpture, or architecture.

But now let me speak to you about this word "ghostly"; it is a much bigger word, perhaps, than some of you imagine. The old English had no other word for "spiritual" or

"supernatural"—which two terms you know, are not English but Latin. Everything that religion to-day calls divine, holy, miraculous, was sufficiently explained for the old Anglo-Saxons by the term ghostly. They spoke of a man's ghost, instead of speaking of his spirit or soul; and everything relating to religious knowledge they called ghostly. In the modern formula of the Catholic confession, which has remained almost unchanged for nearly two thousand years, you will find that the priest is always called a "ghostly" father—which means that his business is to take care of the ghosts or souls of men as a father does. In addressing the priest, the penitent really calls him "Father of my ghost." You will see, therefore, that a very large meaning really attaches to the adjective. It means everything relating to the supernatural. It means to the Christian even God himself, for the Giver of Life is always called in English the Holy Ghost.

Accepting the evolutional philosophy which teaches that the modern idea of God as held by western nations is really but a development from the primitive belief in a shadow-soul, the term ghost in its reference to the supreme being certainly could not be found fault with. On the contrary, there is a weirdness about this use of the word which adds greatly to its solemnity. But whatever belief we have, or have not, as regards religious creeds, one thing that modern science has done for us, is to prove beyond all question that everything which we used to consider material and solid is essentially ghostly, as is any ghost. If we do not believe in old-fashioned stories and theories about ghosts, we are nevertheless obliged to recognise to-day that we are ghosts of ourselves—and utterly incomprehensible. The mystery of the universe is now weighing upon us, becoming heavier and heavier, more and more awful, as our knowledge expands, and it is especially a ghostly mystery. All great art reminds us in some way of this universal riddle; that is why I say that all great art has something ghostly in it.

It touches something within us which relates to infinity. When you read a very great thought, when you see a wonderful picture or statue or building, and when you hear certain kinds of music, you feel a thrill in the heart and mind much like the thrill which in all times men felt when they thought they saw a ghost or a god. Only the modern thrill is incomparably larger and longer and deeper. And this is why, in spite of all knowledge, the world still finds pleasure in the literature of the supernatural, and will continue to find pleasure in it for hundreds of years to come. The ghostly represents always some shadow of truth, and no amount of disbelief in what used to be called ghosts can ever diminish human interest in what relates to that truth.

So you will see that the subject is not altogether trifling. Certainly it is of very great moment in relation to great literature. The poet or the story-teller who can not give the reader a little ghostly pleasure at times never can be either a really great writer or a great thinker. I have already said that I know of no exception to this rule in the whole of English literature. Take, for instance, Macaulay, the most practical, hard-headed, logical writer of the century, the last man in whom you would expect to find the least trace of superstition. Had you read only certain of his essays, you would scarcely think him capable of touching the chords of the supernatural. But he has done this in a masterly way in several of the "Lays of Ancient Rome" —for example, in speaking of the apparition of the Twin Brethren at the battle of Lake Regillus, and of Tarquin haunted by the phantom of his victim Lucretia. Both of these passages give the ghostly thrill in a strong way; and there is a fainter thrill of the same sort to be experienced from the reading of parts of the "Prophecy of Capys." It is because Macaulay had this power, though using it sparingly, that his work is so great. If he had not been able to write these lines of poetry which I referred to, he could not even have made his history of England the living history

that it is. A man who has no ghostly feeling can not make anything alive, not even a page of history or a page of oratory. To touch men's souls, you must know all that those souls can be made to feel by words; and to know that, you must yourself have a "ghost" in you that can be touched in the same way.

Now leaving the theoretical for the practical part of the theme, let us turn to the subject of the relation between ghosts and dreams.

No good writer—no great writer—ever makes a study of the supernatural according to anything which has been done before by other writers. This is one of those subjects upon which you can not get real help from books. It is not from books, nor from traditions, nor from legends, nor from anything of that kind that you can learn how to give your reader a ghostly thrill. I do not mean that it is of no use for you to read what has been written upon the subject, so far as mere methods of expression, mere effects of literary workmanship, are concerned. On the contrary, it is very important that you should read all you can of what is good in literature upon these subjects; you will learn from them a great deal about curious values of words, about compactness and power of sentences, about peculiarities of beliefs and of terrors relating to those beliefs. But you must never try to use another man's ideas or feelings, taken from a book, in order to make a supernatural effect. If you do, the work will never be sincere, and will never make a thrill. You must use your own ideas and feelings only, under all possible circumstances. And where are you to get these ideas and feelings from, if you do not believe in ghosts? From your dreams. Whether you believe in ghosts or not, all the artistic elements of ghostly literature exist in your dreams, and form a veritable treasury of literary material for the man that knows how to use them.

All the great effects obtained by poets and story writers, and even by religious teachers, in the treatment of super-

natural fear or mystery, have been obtained, directly or indirectly, through dreams. Study any great ghost story in any literature, and you will find that no matter how surprising or unfamiliar the incidents seem, a little patient examination will prove to you that every one of them has occurred, at different times, in different combinations, in dreams of your own. They give you a thrill. But why? Because they remind you of experiences, imaginative or emotional, which you had forgotten. There can be no exception to this rule—absolutely none. I was speaking to you the other day about a short story by Bulwer Lytton, as being the best ghost story in the English language. The reason why it is the best story of this kind is simply because it represents with astonishing faithfulness the experiences of nightmare. The terror of all great stories of the supernatural is really the terror of nightmare, projected into waking consciousness. And the beauty or tenderness of other ghost stories or fairy-stories, or even of certain famous and delightful religious legends, is the tenderness and beauty of dreams of a happier kind, dreams inspired by love or hope or regret. But in all cases where the supernatural is well treated in literature, dream experience is the source of the treatment. I know that I am now speaking to an audience acquainted with literature of which I know practically nothing. But I believe that there can be no exception to these rules even in the literature of the Far East. I do not mean to say that there may not be in Chinese and in Japanese literature many ghost stories which are not derived from dream-experience. But I will say that if there are any of this kind, they are not worth reading, and can not belong to any good class of literature. I have read translations of a number of Chinese ghost stories in French, also a wonderful English translation of ghostly Chinese stories in two volumes, entitled "Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio," by Herbert Giles. These stories, translated by a great scholar, are very wonderful; but I noticed that in every suc-

cessful treatment of a supernatural subject, the incidents of the story invariably correspond with the phenomena of dreams. Therefore I think that I can not be mistaken in my judgment of the matter. Such Japanese stories as I could get translations of, obeyed the same rule. The other day, in a story which I read for the first time, I was very much interested to find an exact parallel between the treatment of a supernatural idea by the Japanese author, and by the best English author of dream studies. The story was about a picture, painted upon a screen, representing a river and a landscape. In the Japanese story (perhaps it has a Chinese origin) the painter makes a sign to the screen; and a little boat begins to sail down the river, and sails out of the picture into the room, and the room becomes full of water, and the painter, or magician, or whoever he is, gets into the boat and sails away into the picture again, and disappears forever. This is exactly, in every detail, a dream story, and the excellence of it is in its truth to dream experience. The same phenomena you will find, under another form, in "Alice in Wonderland," and "Through the Looking Glass."

But to return to the point where we left off. I was saying that all successful treatment of the ghostly or the impossible must be made to correspond as much as possible with the truth of dream experience, and that Bulwer Lytton's story of the haunted house illustrates the rule. Let us now consider especially the literary value of nightmare. Nightmare, the most awful form of dream, is also one of the most peculiar. It has probably furnished all the important elements of religious and supernatural terror which are to be found in really great literature. It is a mysterious thing in itself; and scientific psychology has not yet been able to explain many facts in regard to it. We can take the phenomena of nightmare separately, one by one, and show their curious relation to various kinds of superstitious fear and supernatural belief.

The first remarkable fact in nightmare is the beginning

of it. It begins with a kind of suspicion, usually. You feel afraid without knowing why. Then you have the impression that something is acting upon you from a distance —something like fascination, yet not exactly fascination, for there may be no visible fascinator. But feeling uneasy, you wish to escape, to get away from the influence that is making you afraid. Then you find it is not easy to escape. You move with great difficulty. Presently the difficulty increases—you can not move at all. You want to cry out, and you can not; you have lost your voice. You are actually in a state of trance—seeing, hearing, feeling, but unable to move or speak. This is the beginning. It forms one of the most terrible emotions from which a man can suffer. If it continued more than a certain length of time, the mere fear might kill. Nightmare does sometimes kill, in cases where the health has been very much affected by other causes.

Of course we have nothing in ordinary waking life of such experience—the feeling of being deprived of will and held fast from a great distance by some viewless power. This is the real experience of magnetism, mesmerism; and it is the origin of certain horrible beliefs of the Middle Ages in regard to magical power. Suppose we call it supernatural mesmerism, for want of a better word. It is not true mesmerism, because in real hypnotic conditions, the patient does not feel or think or act mentally according to his own personality; he acts by the will of another. In nightmare the will is only suspended, and the personal consciousness remains; this is what makes the horror of it. So we shall call the first stage supernatural mesmerism, only with the above qualification. Now let us see how Bulwer Lytton uses this experience in his story.

A man is sitting in a chair, with a lamp on the table beside him, and is reading Macaulay's essays, when he suddenly becomes uneasy. A shadow falls upon the page. He rises, and tries to call; but he can not raise his voice

above a whisper. He tries to move; and he can not stir hand or foot. The spell is already upon him. This is the first part of nightmare.

The second stage of the phenomenon, which sometimes mingles with the first stage, is the experience of terrible and unnatural appearances. There is always a darkening of the visible, sometimes a disappearance or dimming of the light. In Bulwer Lytton's story there is a fire burning in the room, and a very bright lamp. Gradually both lamp and fire become dimmer and dimmer; at last all light completely vanishes, and the room becomes absolutely dark, except for spectral and unnatural luminosities that begin to make their appearance. This also is a very good study of dream experience. The third stage of nightmare, the final struggle, is chiefly characterised by impossible occurrences, which bring to the dreamer the extreme form of horror, while convincing him of his own impotence. For example, you try to fire a pistol or to use a steel weapon. If a pistol, the bullet will not project itself more than a few inches from the muzzle; then it drops down limply, and there is no report. If a sword or dagger, the blade becomes soft, like cotton or paper. Terrible appearances, monstrous or unnatural figures, reach out hands to touch; if human figures, they will grow to the ceiling, and bend themselves fantastically as they approach. There is one more stage, which is not often reached—the climax of the horror. That is when you are caught or touched. The touch in nightmare is a very peculiar sensation, almost like an electric shock, but unnaturally prolonged. It is not pain, but something worse than pain, an experience never felt in waking hours.

The third and fourth stages have been artistically mixed together by Bulwer Lytton. The phantom towers from floor to ceiling, vague and threatening; the man attempts to use a weapon, and at the same time receives a touch or shock that renders him absolutely powerless. He de-

scribes the feeling as resembling the sensation of some ghostly electricity. The study is exactly true to dream-experience. I need not here mention this story further, since from this point a great many other elements enter into it which, though not altogether foreign to our subject, do not illustrate that subject so well as some of the stories of Poe. Poe has given us other peculiar details of night-mare-experience, such as horrible sounds. Often we hear in such dreams terrible muffled noises, as of steps coming. This you will find very well studied in the story called "The Fall of the House of Usher." Again in these dreams inanimate objects either become alive, or suggest to us, by their motion, the hiding of some horrible life behind them—curtains, for example, doors left half open, alcoves imperfectly closed. Poe has studied these in "Eleonora" and in some other sketches.

Dreams of the terrible have beyond question had a good deal to do with the inspiration both of religious and of superstitious literature. The returning of the dead, visions of heavenly or infernal beings,—these, when well described, are almost always exact reproductions of dream-experience. But occasionally we find an element of waking fear mixed with them—for example, in one of the oldest ghost stories of the world, the story in "The Book of Job." The poet speaks of feeling intense cold, and feeling the hairs of his head stand up with fear. These experiences are absolutely true, and they belong to waking life. The sensation of cold and the sensation of horror are not sensations of dreams. They come from extraordinary terror felt in active existence, while we are awake. You will observe the very same signs of fear in a horse, a dog, or a cat—and there is reason to suppose that in these animal cases, also, supernatural fear is sometimes a cause. I have seen a dog—a brave dog, too—terribly frightened by seeing a mass of paper moved by a slight current of air. This slight wind did not reach the place where the dog was lying; he could not therefore

associate the motion of the paper with a motion of the wind; he did not understand what was moving the paper; the mystery alarmed him, and the hair on his back stood up with fear. But the mingling of such sensations of waking fear with dream sensations of fear, in a story or poem, may be very effectually managed, so as to give to the story an air of reality, of actuality, which could not be obtained in any other way. A great many of our old fairy ballads and goblin stories mixed the two experiences together with the most excellent results. I should say that the fine German story of "Undine" is a good example of this kind. The sight of the faces in the water of the river, the changing of waterfalls and cataracts into ghostly people, the rising from the closed well of the form of Undine herself, the rising of the flood behind her, and the way in which she "weeps her lover to death"—all this is pure dream; and it seems real because most of us have had some such experiences of fancy in our own dreams. But the other part of the story, dealing with human emotions, fears, passions—these are of waking life, and the mixture is accomplished in a most artistic way. Speaking of Undine obliges me also to speak of Undine's predecessors in mediæval literature—the mediæval spirits, the *succubæ* and *incubi*, the sylphs and salamanders or salamandrines, the whole wonderful goblin population of water, air, forest, and fire. All the good stories about them are really dream studies. And coming down to the most romantic literature of our own day, the same thing must be said of those strange and delightful stories by Gautier, "La Morte Amoureuse," "Arria Marcella," "Le Pied de Momie." The most remarkable is perhaps "La Morte Amoureuse"; but there is in this a study of double personality, which complicates it too much for purposes of present illustration. I shall therefore speak of "Arria Marcella" instead. Some young students visit the city of Pompeii, to study the ruins and the curiosities preserved in the museum of Naples, nearby. All of them are fa-

miliar with classic literature and classic history; moreover, they are artists, able to appreciate the beauty of what they see. At the time of the eruption, which occurred nearly two thousand years ago, many people perished by being smothered under the rain of ashes; but their bodies were encased in the deposit so that the form was perfectly preserved as in a mould. Some of these moulds are to be seen in the museum mentioned; and one is the mould of the body of a beautiful young woman. The younger of the three students sees this mould, and romantically wishes that he could see and love the real person, so many centuries dead. That night, while his companions are asleep, he leaves his room and wanders into the ruined city, for the pleasure of thinking all by himself. But presently, as he turns the corner of a street, he finds that the city looks quite different from what it had appeared by day; the houses seem to have grown taller; they look new, bright, clean. While he is thus wandering, suddenly the sun rises, and the streets fill with people—not the people of to-day, but the people of two thousand years ago, all dressed in the old Greek and Roman costumes. After a time a young Greek comes up to the student and speaks to him in Latin. He has learned enough Latin at the university to be able to answer, and a conversation begins, of which the result is that he is invited to the theatre of Pompeii to see the gladiators and other amusements of the time. While in this theatre, he suddenly sees the woman that he wanted to see, the woman whose figure was preserved in the Naples museum. After the theatre, he is invited to her house; and everything is very delightful until suddenly the girl's father appears on the scene. The old man is a Christian, and he is very angry that the ghost of his daughter should deceive a young man in this manner. He makes a sign of the cross, and immediately poor Arria crumbles into dust, and the young man finds himself alone in the ruins of Pompeii. Very beautiful this story is; but every detail in it is dream study.

I have given so much mention to it only because it seems to me the very finest French example of this artistic use of dream experience. But how many other romances belong to the same category? I need only mention among others Irving's "The Adalantado of the Seven Cities," which is pure dream, so realistically told that it gives the reader the sensation of being asleep. Although such romances as "The Seven Sleepers," "Rip Van Winkle," and "Urashima," are not, on the other hand, pure dreams, yet the charm of them is just in that part where dream experience is used. The true romance in all is in the old man's dream of being young, and waking up to cold and grave realities. By the way, in the old French lays of Marie de France, there is an almost precisely similar story to the Japanese one—similar, at least, at all points except the story of the tortoise. It is utterly impossible that the oriental and the occidental story-tellers could have, either of them, borrowed from the other; more probably each story is a spontaneous growth. But it is curious to find the legend substantially the same in other literatures—Indian and Arabian and Javanese. In all of the versions the one romantic truth is ever the same—a dream truth.

Now besides the artistic elements of terror and of romance, dreams certainly furnish us with the most penetrating and beautiful qualities of ghostly tenderness that literature contains. For the dead people that we loved all come back to us occasionally in dreams, and look and talk as if they were actually alive, and become to us everything that we could have wished them to be. In a dream-meeting with the dead, you must have observed how everything is gentle and beautiful, and yet how real, how true it seems. From the most ancient times such visions of the dead have furnished literature with the most touching and the most exquisite passages of unselfish affection. We find this experience in nearly all the ancient ballad-literature of Europe; we find it in all the world's epics; we find it in every

kind of superior poetry; and modern literature draws from it more and more as the years go by. Even in such strange compositions as the "Kalevala" of the Finns, an epic totally unlike any other ever written in this world, the one really beautiful passage in an emotional sense is the coming back of the dead mother to comfort the wicked son, which is a dream study, though not so represented in the poem.

Yet one thing more. Our dreams of heaven, what are they in literature but reflections in us of the more beautiful class of dreams? In the world of sleep all the dead people we loved meet us again; the father recovers his long-buried child, the husband his lost wife, separated lovers find the union that was impossible in this world, those whom we lost sight of in early years—dead sisters, brothers, friends—all come back to us just as they were then, just as loving, and as young, and perhaps even more beautiful than they could really have been. In the world of sleep there is no growing old; there is immortality, there is everlasting youth. And again how soft, how happy everything is; even the persons unkind to us in waking life become affectionate to us in dreams. Well, what is heaven but this? Religion in painting perfect happiness for the good, only describes the best of our dream life, which is also the best of our waking life; and I think you will find that the closer religion has kept to dream experience in these descriptions, the happier has been the result. Perhaps you will say that I have forgotten how religion teaches the apparition of supernatural powers of a very peculiar kind. But I think that you will find the suggestion for these powers also in dream life. Do we not pass through the air in dreams, pass through solid substances, perform all kinds of miracles, achieve all sorts of impossible things? I think we do. At all events, I am certain that when, as men-of-letters, you have to deal with any form of supernatural subject—whether terrible, or tender, or pathetic, or splendid—you will do well, if you have a good imagination, not to trust to books for your in-

spiration. Trust to your own dream-life; study it carefully, and draw your inspiration from that. For dreams are the primary source of almost everything that is beautiful in the literature which treats of what lies beyond mere daily experience.

CHAPTER VI

ENGLISH BALLADS

First of all let us attempt to define what a ballad is. In different languages the word has not the same meaning. A French man of letters uses the word ballad in a much narrower sense than the German; and even the German does not always give to it the same breadth of meaning that the English poets attached to it. Furthermore, exact scholars give narrower interpretations to the name than do men of letters generally. But we can not restrict the significance of the word as certain scholars would have us do, simply because all attempts to establish a sharp line between ballads proper and other forms of poetry closely resembling them, have proved futile. The best way for us to do will be to take the word "ballad" in its very largest English meaning, as signifying a short narrative story in simple verse. Although the majority of ballads take certain forms, many do not; and it would not be correct to say that a poem is not a ballad because it happens to be in one kind of verse rather than another. It has been among my own pupils a matter of difficulty sometimes to distinguish a long narrative poem or epic from a ballad; they have observed with good reason that certain English ballads are very long. But they are not so long as to be compared with other forms of narrative poetry; and in a general way it may be stated that a ballad tells one simple story or incident only. Epics, in some cases, not only tell a great many different stories related to each other, but form what we might call a romance or a novel in verse.

We may at once attempt to state what a ballad is not. It is not a romance, nor is it necessarily a complete story. It

deals rather with incidents than with complete or full narratives. When we have one great collection of ballads, possessing a fixed order, and all dealing with or relating to one subject, as in the English cycle of Robin Hood, or in the Persian cycle of Kurroglou, then we have what has been called a ballad-epic; but it is really an epic too. With this view of the case you might ask if the Song of Roland might not be called a ballad-epic. It is indeed divided into a number of distinct parts, each independent of the other, arranged for singing, and having a burden or chorus. Were the term ballad-epic really admissible, I should say yes; but for the sake of definiteness we had better say no—especially as the style and tone are a little too high for what we usually call a ballad.

A ballad is not to be confounded either with a song or with a lyric of any sort, although the line of demarcation may sometimes be hard to draw. A song does not necessarily do more than express an emotion, independent of any story or incident. A lyric is any poem expressing one single feeling or thought of an emotional kind, and not composed in any classic or severe form of verse.

Now let us consider the general characteristics of the ballad. The word itself gives some hint of the character of the composition. It is derived from the low Latin, from a verb signifying to dance. In the Italian *ballare*, Spanish *bailar* (both meaning to dance), the English word *ball*, a dancing party; and the English word, adopted from the French, ballet, meaning the artistic professional dances performed in theatres,—we have the survival in modified form of the ancient low Latin verb. Originally the ballad was a song accompanied with dancing. But do not let this derivation cause any confusion in the mind between song proper and the ballad. The earliest forms of song were necessarily religious or military; they celebrated incidents. They were not really lyrics. The history of the term carries us back to very primitive forms of poetical

composition, made in the days before writing was known, and learned by heart generation after generation, each generation probably improving a little upon the oral text. It is even probable that all the great epics of all countries grew out of beginnings like this. Primitive races kept alive the memories of their traditions, of their glories and their sorrows, by song; and the songs were publicly sung on certain occasions, accompanied with religious or war-like or other dances. Not all the people would be equally capable of singing; there would be famous singers or professional singers, like what are called the *ondo-tori* in Japan. These would do the difficult part of the singing; but the people would join in the more familiar parts of the song. Later there would arise an orderly distinction between the parts to be sung by professional singers, and the shorter or more simple parts to be sung by the crowd. The part to be sung by the crowd eventually took in English the name of "burthen" (burden). The word "chorus," sometimes meaning the same thing, is from the Greek; but the Greek word is of dramatic origin, and strictly speaking means much more than a simple burthen. The word "refrain" (from the French) is a better equivalent for our English burthen.

Now the first characteristic of the true ballad, even in modern times, is the refrain or burthen. It may be quite impossible to sing, but it represents the survival of the ancient burthen. Nevertheless, remember that not all ballads have burthens,—though the burthen is the peculiar mark of such compositions. Furthermore, remember that many songs have a chorus or burthen, by which they very much resemble ballads, although they can not always be classed as ballads.

A second characteristic of ballads is their simplicity. A perfect ballad ought always to be so simple that everybody, no matter how ignorant, can understand it; and its emotion

ought to be of such a nature as to appeal to the heart of a child just as well as to the imagination of a man. Every approach to complexity or subtlety is a departure from the true nature of the ballad. Therefore many of the most beautiful lyrical compositions of the nineteenth century, although ballads in form, are not ballads in spirit; for they appeal only to the intelligence and esthetic taste of very cultivated people.

Most of the world's famous ballads, as representing popular feeling and a very early form of composition, were naturally written in the speech of the people, not in the language of the educated classes. So we may say that a third general characteristic of ballad composition is the fact of its being in colloquial speech, or even in dialect. But here again you must remember that not all ballads are so written, and that we are looking only at the general indications.

With the spread of education and the many social changes which have sharpened men's minds, it could not but follow that ballad writing as an art should become extinct. But this does not mean that the art itself is vulgar. Quite the contrary. It only means that the effects of education and knowledge destroy that capacity for purely natural feeling and simple expression that characterises ballads. Educate the peasant, and you take all the poetry out of his soul. If you could educate him to the highest point, he would obtain, of course, a new poetical feeling; but the necessities of civilisation allow him time to learn only the simplest forms of education; and these are just sufficient to destroy much of pleasure that he formerly found in life. Anciently woods and streams were peopled for him with invisible beings; angels and demons walked at his side; the woods had their fairies, the mountains their goblins, the marshes their flitting spirits; and the dead came back to him at times to bear a message or to rebuke a fault. Also the

ground that he trod upon, the plants growing in the field, the clouds above him, the lights of heaven, all were full of mystery and ghostliness. Educate him, and he becomes a good deal of a materialist; for his gods vanish, his fairies and ghosts cease to exist, and modern chemistry, which he is obliged to learn something about, teaches him that the virtues of plants and the qualities of the soil that bears them do not depend upon spiritual matters at all. Furthermore, industrialism impels him to seek the great cities and abandon nature whenever he can find the opportunity. He is thus gradually drawn away from everything that inspired in former times his simple verse. At school he learns to express his feelings and ideas in conventional language; should he speak like his fathers, he is laughed at as a countryman. Yet his fathers, who knew so little, were capable without effort of writing such poetry that the greatest of our modern poets can scarcely do anything equal to them. The change is inevitable, and can not be helped. But it has been so much regretted that I doubt whether a single poet of the nineteenth century, of any real importance, has not tried, and tried in vain for the most part, to write as good a ballad as did the ignorant peasant of two or three hundred years ago. Even at random, one can name a number of such attempts made by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Byron, Shelley, Sir Walter Scott, Tennyson, the two Brownings, Rossetti, Swinburne. It would be folly to protest, in the face of such evidence, that ballad-literature is not worthy of scholarly attention.

A curious fact is the persistence of ballad-compositions even into our own time, and after the true art was dead. I am not now speaking about the poets, but about the common people. During my own boyhood, in London, it was still the custom to compose ballads when any extraordinary event occurred that greatly stirred public emotion—an unhappy suicide, a peculiar murder, a political incident of some unusual description. These were written in the lan-

guage of the lower classes—I might say in cockney English—printed upon large sheets of paper, and sold for a penny apiece by the composer, after he had gathered a crowd round him by singing them in the public streets. Of course, in these cases, the songs were really vulgar, and without any poetical interest whatever; but the spectacle of the ballad singer and his ballad was in the highest degree interesting, for these represented the survival of habits and customs that gave to English literature a great deal of true and noble verse.

Now a few words about the general structure of the old English ballads. They were mostly composed in two forms, the quatrain and the distich. But there were many other forms. The distich form, very common in northern Europe, was less popular in England than the quatrain. The quatrain was composed with only two rhymes—the second and fourth lines rhyming with each other,—so that it would be possible to print the quatrain verses in distich form, though the lines might be very long. Many of the ballads had burthens; and the usual form of the burthen was simple,—that is, it consisted of but one or two lines repeated over and over again with each verse. Most often the burthen was fitted into the quatrain so as to make a part of it. But this was not always the case. Those highly elaborate refrains in the ballads of Rossetti are imitations and combinations of forms that may be found scattered through our large collections of English ballads, with perhaps a few notions taken also from the ballads of other languages. Do not fail to observe that these few remarks which I am making about the English ballad would also apply, with some modifications, to the oral literature of all Europe. Except perhaps the Italian, there is no language which is not quite as rich in ballads as the English—some are even more so.

An example of double refrain is most common with the quatrain; and in this case the quatrain contains really

only two lines of narration, the other two lines being refrains. For example, the second line might be

So fair upriseth the rim of the sun,

and the fourth,

So grey is the sea when the day is done.

In such a case the second and the fourth lines of every stanza from beginning to end would be the same, and in printing ballads we usually print the burthen in italics. Here you may be naturally inclined to ask what relation does the burthen bear to the meaning of ballad. In the old ballads it seldom bears any relation at all to the subject—has nothing to do with it. Then you may ask why not. There is only one explanation that I can give you, and it is this: new ballads were generally composed to be sung to the tune of older ballads, and although the main part of the older ballad in such a case would be forgotten as it ceased to be popular, the old refrain would be preserved by the liking of the people for it—having been accustomed to sing it in a great chorus, they would persist in singing it even with the new ballad. Then, again, popular song-writers, having observed this fact, would presently begin to compose new songs with old refrains, knowing that the old refrains would "catch the people." If you bear these possibilities in mind, you will easily perceive that there is nothing extraordinary about the fact of a refrain having nothing to do with its ballad. In my opinion most of our ballad burthens represent the only extant portions of hundreds of older compositions that have been forever lost. And my theory is supported by the existence of a number of different ballads, undoubtedly written at different times and all having the same refrain, or a part of it. Yet in some cases we find that the refrain, as in modern ballads, is made to bear a relation to the story. Such is the case

in the ballad of "The Two Sisters," with its refrain treating of the locality where the tragedy took place—

There were two sisters lived in a bower,
(*Binnorie, O Binnorie!*)
There came a knight to be their wooer,
(*By the bonny mill-dams of Binnorie.*)

On the other hand, in the ballad of "The Cruel Mother" there is no connection at all between the burthen and the story. It is worth while for you to copy the text of the whole of this ballad as an example of the most striking qualities of such compositions, especially because you will not find this version in the ordinary collections.

She leaned her head against a thorn,
(*The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall!*)
And there she has her young babe born.
(*And the lion shall be lord of all!*)

"Smile not so sweet, my bonny babe,
(*The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall!*)
And ye smile so sweet, ye'll smile me dead."
(*And the lion shall be lord of all!*)

She's howket a grave by the light of the moon,
(*The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall!*)
And there she's buried her sweet babe in.
(*And the lion shall be lord of all!*)

As she was going to the church,
(*The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall!*)
She saw a sweet babe in the porch.
(*And the lion shall be lord of all!*)

"O bonny babe, an ye were mine,
(*The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall!*)
I'd clad ye in silk and sabelline."
(*And the lion shall be lord of all!*)

"O mother mine, when I was thine,
(*The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall!*)

To me ye were not half so kind.
(*And the lion shall be lord of all!*)

"But now I'm in the heavens hie,
(*The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall!*)
And ye have the pains of hell to dree."
(*And the lion shall be lord of all!*)

Here we have a story told in a few lines, but with extraordinary power, for once read, this ballad never can be forgotten. A young girl, to hide her shame, determines to kill her illegitimate child, but at the moment of the act, the child smiles in her face, and this almost prevents the crime. Nevertheless it is accomplished, the child is secretly buried; no one knows of the act; and the mother returns to her life in society as if nothing happened. But one day as she is about to enter a church, she sees a child of such remarkable beauty that her natural affection is aroused, and she can not help saying to the little creature, "Oh, how beautifully I should dress you if you were my boy." The child's answer immediately reveals to her that she is speaking to the ghost of the child she has murdered,—"O mother, when I was your boy, you were not so kind!" The great art of this poem—probably the composition of some peasant—is all in the second verse. This is intensely human, and terribly touching.

Sir Walter Scott, who heard this ballad sung to him by his nurse when he was a child, afterwards made an imitation of it, using the first half of the burthen, and in the second half substituting "Love" for "the lion." His imitation is very pretty and very touching in its way; but it lacks altogether the weird power of the old ballad.

This is the common form of double burthen. Triple burthens occur sometimes. Quadruple are very rare. Generally speaking, the refrain is more frequent in the northern English or Scotch ballad than in the English ballads proper. A majority of our ballads have, indeed, no refrain at all. All those elaborate forms of burthen, such

as you find in Rossetti and in Swinburne, are quite foreign to the spirit and simplicity of the old burthens, and must be regarded as of purely modern construction.

I need not go to any greater length on the subject of the refrain. The next thing to observe is that the bulk of English ballads are verses of eight syllables, this being euphonically the most natural form of English construction. Now, as regards the value of these compositions to you, a few words will be necessary. Although ballad-literature contains many beauties of an astonishing kind, you would make a great mistake in supposing that the general average of the compositions is high. Quite the contrary is the case. Our great collections of ballads, notably that of Professor Child, contain a very large amount of insignificant or vulgar material, quite useless to the man of letters. Nevertheless the man of letters must read them. The precious part of such literature exists only as gold exists in the natural state, mixed with various forms of sand or of hard rock. Sometimes we find an absolutely perfect ballad, just as a gold miner sometimes finds a lump or nugget of pure gold. But this is rare. The study of ballads requires great patience; and in your case especially so, because most of them, and nearly all the best, are in dialect, and can not be properly studied without the help of a glossary. Furthermore, the worth of such study must depend entirely upon your individual capacity for poetical feeling; this is of nature, and if you have it not, it is of no use to occupy yourselves with the study at all. But, if on reading a few of the best of such compositions, you feel your heart moved by them, I should then by all means advise you to follow up the study; for it would certainly have a considerable effect upon your literary studies and tastes in other directions. Again, those of you who know French and German would do well to pay a corresponding attention to the French and German ballads, especially the German.

The influence of the ballads in modern poetry was per-

haps more marked in Germany than in England, and the first publication of the English ballads by Bishop Percy had an immense effect upon German poetry. In the time of Percy, Dr. Johnson strongly attacked the new taste, from the classical point of view, but in spite of his opposition, the imitation of the ballad began even in his own time. Goldsmith, for example, with his ballad of "Edwin and Angelina," shows the influence; but the poem itself also shows how little Goldsmith really understood how much the ballad form depends for success upon its simplicity. Such lines as

> To where yon taper cheers the vale
> With *hospitable* ray,—

or

> Where wilds, *immeasurably* spread,
> Seem *lengthening* as I go,—

are in the pedantic taste of the time. No old ballad writer would have used such big words as "hospitable," "immeasurably," or even "lengthening." The old singers used words of two syllables only when they could not find a word of one to express their meaning. So Goldsmith's poem, although a ballad, is by no means a successful imitation. Burns was a song writer rather than a balladist; and before Sir Walter Scott we have scarcely any noteworthy imitations of the old ballad, except the magnificent composition of Hamilton of Bangour, "The Braes of Yarrow," beginning

> Busk ye, busk ye, my merry, merry bride.

The only criticism to be made of Hamilton's composition is that its rhyme and melody are too astonishingly perfect. We have no ancient ballad of so complicated a form. Coleridge's "Love" is open to the same objection as Goldsmith's composition, though in a lesser degree. It is ob-

viously artificial. Wordsworth's ballads, some of them, come much nearer to the proper standard of simplicity. But Sir Walter Scott, who from childhood heard the old Scotch ballads sung by the people, and who knew the dialect as a mother tongue, was really the first to imitate the old ballad with a fair degree of success. The difficulty of the feat was not, perhaps, appreciated until a later day. Of great Victorian singers, very few have been able to do as well as Sir Walter Scott. The best examples of which I can think for the moment are Tennyson's "Lady Clare" and Rossetti's "Stratton Water." As a rule our best poets understand that it is almost impossible to repeat the feats of ancient balladists; and while they continue indeed to write ballads, these are compositions of an altogether artistic and very elaborate kind. The subject of the modern ballad proper belongs to lyrical poetry, and can not be separately considered, because of the immense variety of the forms used, and the departure from all ancient rules.

And now it only remains for us to attempt some advice on the subject of choice in the study of the old ballads. I will offer only a few titles; because the reading of a few poems of this kind will be quite a sufficient test of your own taste in this direction. The two most important classes of ballad, in regard to emotional expression, are the fairy ballads, and the love ballads. Of the fairy ballads there are not many; but of the love ballads there is an enormous variety. Taking the fairy ballads first, I should remark to you that the most beautiful and most important of all is "Tam Lin,"—and that the best version of this (because there are very great many versions) is that to be found in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." Next to this in importance is perhaps the very famous poem of "Thomas Rhymer," to be found in the same book. Thirdly I would recommend "Kemp Owyne," and fourthly "The Earl of Mar's Daughter." The last mentioned, you would do well to read in the first volume of Child's collection.

Next about the love ballads. I think the most beautiful of all is "Child Waters,"—you will find it in Child's collection. Next in interest, perhaps, is the more fantastic ballad of "The Gay Goshawk." And as the third, and as a tragical example, I should recommend that version of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" which you will find in the first volume of Child.

Then everybody ought to know the ballad of "Sir Patrick Spens" (or Spence), and the story of "Glenkindie,"—about the harper who

> Could harp the fish out o' the sea
> Or blood out of a stane,
> Or milk out o' the maiden's breast
> That never bairns had nane.

If you want the horrible, there is nothing more horrible in ballad literature than the story of "Lady Maisry," which you will find in the first volume of Child; and if you want the heroic, there is no finer story in the same collection than that of "The Douglas Tragedy." The student also should certainly read some of Sir Walter Scott's imitations, the best of which are the terrible "Glenfinlas," "The Eve of Saint John," and "The Grey Brother,"—as well as some of his splendid translations of German ballads, which first gave him his reputation.

In conclusion, let us return again to the question of what is a ballad. We can not make any better definition than this: A ballad is a short narrative poem composed for singing or reciting. In spite of all exceptions, remember that this is the important part of the definition, and that especial emphasis must be placed upon the word "narrative."

But you will very naturally ask, How is it that a great many poems which do not fulfil this condition are called ballads by the great masters of poetry? For instance, Wordsworth and Coleridge called their first work "Lyrical

Ballads"; Tennyson published volumes under the name of ballads; Rossetti's first poems were issued under the title of "Ballads and Poems"; most of Swinburne's work, and a great deal of Browning's, has been given the same general name. Yet a great number of the compositions thus labelled are certainly not ballads in the old English sense, and this is particularly the case with the work of Swinburne. Here we have to reckon with the ambiguity of the word. What Swinburne usually means by a ballad is what French poets call *ballade*, a very complicated form of verse, which need not be a narrative poem at all, but simply a lyric. And the other great poets named sometimes used the English word in the same loose signification. Moreover, custom is now strengthening the ambiguity; and a new ballad-literature is growing which takes forms of the most elaborate lyrical description. However, please bear in mind this fact, that for you the study of ballad-literature will be most useful when it is made comparative and reduced to the simplest arrangement. I refer to the comparison between Japanese and European narrative poems of the simpler kind. The limits of this kind will become tolerably well established in your memory by the simple reading of those English ballads whose titles I have recommended.

CHAPTER VII

NOTES ON HERRICK

It is a very curious thing that of the masterpieces in English literature which are at once very licentious, and yet almost unmatched, in their way, as models of literary excellence, two were written by clergymen. I have already spoken to you of the wonderful prose work which has now become an English classic—the work of Laurence Sterne. But long before Sterne was born, there was another clergyman who a little resembled him in character, and who selected poetry instead of prose as a vehicle of his thought. He was the greatest of the Caroline poets—that is to say, of the poets who sang in the time of Charles the First. The Latin name for Charles is Carolus,—from which we have made the adjective Caroline.

Robert Herrick was the name of this clergyman-poet. He was born in 1591 in London, the son of a goldsmith. There was probably considerable genius in the family, for it was connected through hundreds of years with literature in some way or other. I may mention, for example, that a descendent of the Herricks became the mother of the great Swift. We do not know very much about the boyhood and youth of Herrick, but we know that he graduated at Cambridge University, and that he distinguished himself in classical studies. After this he was appointed a clergyman in a little country town in Devonshire called Dean Prior. From this position he never rose—whether through want of influence or not, we are not sure. When the Puritan government came into power they put him out of his church; but he got the position back again when Charles the Sec-

ond ascended the throne. In 1674 he died—at the great age of eighty-three.

That is all which it is necessary to know about his history, but his character certainly deserves attention. Such a man was never naturally fitted to be a clergyman. He loved the pleasures of this world as very few laymen do—good eating and drinking, out of door amusements, flowers and birds, and—woman! No man of the time wrote more love poetry, and very few wrote equally good love poetry. Yet, strange to say, he never married—declaring that he liked all women too much to worship only one. How much of jest and how much of earnest there was in this statement is not certain; there is no proof that he ever seriously misbehaved himself, and poverty might have been the reason that he remained a bachelor. But to judge by his poetry, one would imagine that he passed the greater part of his time in love poetry and love making, instead of attending to his duties in the church. Like Sterne, he was eccentric even in the church itself. He would write sermons, and read them to the people until they fell asleep—when he would throw the manuscript at their heads. It is not wonderful that the Puritans thought him unfit to teach religion. Another worldly trait was his love of sports, country games, dancing—in which he also resembled Sterne. Nevertheless, he seems to have been much liked. He never did harm to anybody, and his amusements were mostly of a very innocent description. Unfortunately, so much can not be said for the whole of his poetry. He wrote much that was vulgar and even at times worse than vulgar. But the best of his poetry was of extraordinary beauty—we have nothing to compare with it after his time until we come to Blake. And this poetry shows the man in a good light. It is evident that one who could write so simply and joyfully about life must have had a good heart. He never took religion very seriously, because he was too healthy, too energetic, too naturally happy, to trouble himself about the question of a

future life. But he wrote religious poetry also, showing us that he thought of God as a very good-natured person like himself who was not going to be angry with a man for his taking a little amusement.

To-day Herrick is more read than he was during his lifetime, and yearly many new editions of his works are issued, some of them beautifully illustrated. One reason for the increasing popularity of this old poet is certainly that he reflects the love of English customs and manners that have been rapidly passing away since the introduction of railroads and telegrams. But a deeper and better reason is that he possesses, to a most eminent degree, one quality extremely rare in poets of the nineteenth century,—I mean simplicity. We are feeling more and more every year how great a quality this is, because modern life and modern education make simplicity of thinking almost impossible—much more, simplicity of expression. If you understand that simplicity means truthfulness—truthfulness in feeling and in expression—you will better perceive what I mean. The times in which we live are artificial; the time in which Herrick lived was more natural, and so far as the good side of life was concerned, much happier. And this reflection of old time happiness and joyousness is the great secret of Herrick's charm.

You will have seen a great many pieces from Herrick in the anthologies; even children learn something of Herrick by heart. What I am trying to do now is to give you examples of the best class of those lyrical pieces which you will not find in the ordinary anthologies. Whether you will be pleased or not I don't know; but I believe that you can not fail to perceive how pretty many of the thoughts are, and how remarkable the effect that the singer can produce with words of only one and two syllables where a modern poet would certainly use many long and sonorous words of Greek or Latin derivation. And remember that this Herrick was also a good Latin and Greek scholar, yet

he knew how to use all the beauties of his mother tongue without going to the classics for verbal inspiration.

The whole work of Herrick may be divided into the profane poems, called "Hesperides," and the religious poems, called "Noble Numbers." But the profane poems may be again divided broadly into epigrams and true poems. The epigrams are simply worthless; there is nothing in them either of genius or talent. It is in the epigrams that Herrick chiefly disgraced his real place as a poet. But I am not anxious to call attention to his faults—we shall speak only of his beauties, and make our first selection from the "Hesperides." The poems in the "Hesperides," which are nearly one thousand in number, and very short for the most part, contain a great many compositions on the subjects of flowers, of love, and of human happiness. The last mentioned class represent what we might call Herrick's philosophy; the other two classes represent his sense of duty. Let us begin with the subject of flowers,—I think that some of his compositions upon this theme will remind you, more than once, of Japanese poems treating of like things. For example, here is a little poem addressed to cherry blossoms.

Ye may simper, blush, and smile,
And perfume the air awhile;
But, sweet things, you must be gone,
Fruit, ye know, is coming on;
Then, ah! then, where is your grace,
Whenas cherries come in place?

This is so very simple, childish in fact, so far as language is concerned, that you may not perhaps at once perceive the real merit of it. The philosophy is implied only, not expressed, but the thought is the same as that of many eastern poems upon the same subject—with this important difference, that the flowers are personified. The word "simper" is only used in regard to women. It means to make one's face seem as pretty and as modest as possible for the sake of pleasing men. The poet thinks of cherry flowers

as beautiful young girls who wish to please by their smiles and pretty ways; but smiles and pretty ways have very little influence in this world where interest is concerned. Fruit—that is, material value—is more important by far than mere outward charm; the world wants substantial worth.

Again let us take this little poem about fields in the autumn season. The poet personifies the fields, and addresses them as if they were sad people.

Ye have been fresh and green,
  Ye have been filled with flowers,
And ye the walks have been
  Where maids have spent their hours.

Ye have beheld how they
  With wicker arks did come
To kiss and bear away
  The richer cowslips home.

You've heard them sweetly sing,
  And seen them in a round;
Each virgin like a spring
  With honeysuckles crowned.

But now ye see none here
  Whose silvery feet did tread,
And with dishevelled hair,
  Adorned this smoother mead.

Like unthrifts, having spent
  Your stock and needy grown
You're left here to lament
  Your poor estates, alone.

This has been called one of the prettiest poems in the whole of English literature, and I am sure that you will wonder why. Certainly it is not because of the mere language used, neither is it because there is any strange or new idea in the composition. It is because the little verses, describing only what everybody has seen, produce in the

mind a gentle melancholy such as everybody must have felt in walking through the forests in the later autumn. Then the grasses have become withered and brown, the flowers are dead, the insects have stopped singing, perhaps a cold wind is blowing under a grey sky, and the children who used to play in the grass every day do not come to play any more. Then you think about the beautiful blue skies of summer that used to be seen over the meadow, and the flowers that used to sprinkle the grass, and the games of the children; wherefore the melancholy of the change comes upon you. That is why everybody likes this poem so much. But there are in it some allusions which are only English, and may need explanation. Herrick is speaking of the young girls, who, in England, love to gather flowers in the field and bring them home to decorate their rooms. It may seem strange to you to read of girls kissing the flowers, but should you ever observe little English girls playing, you would observe that they kiss any inanimate object that gives them pleasure—a picture, a bird, a flower, a pet kitten, or a little dog; for it is the instinctive impulse of affection with western people to touch the lips to anything liked. The third verse refers also to something particularly English, a country dance and song—girls, especially, dancing in a circle, or, as the poet calls it, a "round." Formerly garlands of flowers were worn in the hair on such occasions, and a pretty country girl, so crowned with flowers, might have seemed to the poet like the goddess of the spring. The rest of the poem, I think, needs no explanation.

Here is a little poem about daffodils. We do not find in English other poetry about cherry flowers and daffodils until we come to the days of Wordsworth and of George Meredith. But if Herrick seems to you too simple, try to remember that he represents the sixteenth century, not the nineteenth.

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;

As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you;
We have as short a spring,
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

This poem is somewhat more reflective than the greater number of Herrick's verses. Of course there is no new thought for you in these lines. The comparison of flower life to human life is very old indeed—it was made by the Buddhah before the English language had been formed. But it is not necessary, to make a good poem, that the thought should be new—it is necessary only that the thought should be spoken in some new way. Herrick's way is the charm here. Within only a few lines he expresses all the sadness of human existence, and this is the language of a child—simple and sweet as anything that could be said.

Now let us read a little composition about violets. I suppose you know that in the flower-symbolism of the west the violet is the emblem of feminine modesty and gentleness; therefore it is that many English girls are called Violet. The flower, in its wild state, never grows very tall, and is generally found in shady places, half hidden among tall plants. Thus it seemed to poetical fancy as if modestly trying to hide its face, like a young girl.

Welcome, maids-of-honour,
  You do bring
  In the spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
  Fresh and fair;
  Yet you are
More sweet than any.

You're the maiden posies,
  And so graced
  To be placed
'Fore damask roses.

Yet, though thus respected,
  By and by
  Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected.

The violet is a very small flower, with a very delicate fragrance; probably it was not as much cultivated in private gardens during Herrick's day as it is to-day. As it is the first English flower to appear in spring, he poetically calls it the spring's maid-of-honour; you know that the maid-of-honour walks before the queen usually to announce her coming. At that season everybody is delighted with violets, because there are no other flowers, but later in the season larger and prosperous flowers appear, and then the violets are neglected. So in the human world, young people who really deserve to be loved because of their modesty and gentleheartedness are likely to be little cared for when brought into rivalry with women who are much more clever and cunning, and probably less pure heartèd. I may mention that roses are compared by western poets especially to women, mature women rather than young girls. Tennyson helped to change the general rule when he wrote "Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls." But even here we must notice that although the rose is compared to a girl, it is compared to a queen among girls,—other girls are only

rosebuds. At all events, in Herrick's time and even to-day a woman rather than a girl would be compared to a rose. A maiden only should be compared to a violet. To some degree the violet in western symbolism represents what the plum flower represents in Japanese symbolism—although the lily shares the moral honours. On the other hand, roses have no particular moral significance; they signify beauty only. I think that western poets may be said to use roses as symbols of feminine beauty, somewhat as Japanese poets use the symbolism of the cherry flower.

Occasionally Herrick follows the classic way in speaking of flowers, but even then he remains very simple in his art. Notice this little poem about lillies.

White though ye be, yet lilies, know,
From the first ye were not so;
But I'll tell ye
What befell ye:
Cupid and his mother lay
In a cloud, while both did play,
He with his pretty finger pressed
The ruby niplet of her breast;
Out of which the cream of light,
Like to a dew,
Fell down on you,
And made ye white.

Besides this charming Greek fancy about the milk of a goddess being made of light (a fancy by which the ancients used to account for the existence of the milky way, said to be created by the drops of milk that fell from the breast of the mother of Zeus), notice how very simple the language is. There is no apparent attempt at art anywhere; the only uncommon word is the diminutive "niplet" instead of the modern nipple. But the grace of the word seems familiar, and Herrick excels in this exquisite use of uncommon and caressing diminutives. You may never have seen the word before, but the moment that you see it you know what it means, and you wonder why nobody else

ever thought of using it. Another charming example of such invention is to be found in Herrick's epitaph upon a young mother who died soon after giving birth to a girl-baby.

As gilliflowers do but stay
To blow, and seed, and so away;
So you, sweet lady, sweet as May,
The garden's glory, lived a while
To lend the world your scent and smile,
But when your own fair print was set
Once in a virgin flosculet,
Sweet as yourself, and newly blown,
To give that life, resigned your own:
But so as still the mother's power
Lives in the pretty lady-flower.

The word "flosculet," although almost pure Latin and very rare, is here felt to be the most natural as well as the most delicate word that possibly could be used. You do not need to look at a dictionary to know what it means; and it is an illustration of the fact that whenever Herrick does use a Latin or Greek word, he only does so because he is able to produce with it an effect that no English word could give. Observe also the use of the word "print." "Print" here means an image or exact likeness, in the sense of copy. Herrick was thinking of the child's resembling the mother, as two prints taken from the same picture would resemble one another.

I have often thought that Herrick more resembles the Japanese poets than almost any other English writer, not only because of his love for very short and delicate kinds of verse, but because he frequently expresses in these little stanzas thoughts that very much resemble, in their simple grace, the thoughts of some far eastern poets; and even when the thoughts are not at all the same, the way in which they are uttered may remind you of Japanese verses. Here, for example, is a little poem about a kind of thorny plant which has a very beautiful and fragrant flower. In securing a

spray—or, as the poet calls it, "a sprig"—of this plant, to give a young lady, the poet has pricked his fingers, which gives him an occasion to utter a tiny bit of philosophy.

From this bleeding hand of mine
Take this sprig of eglantine,
Which, though sweet unto your smell,
Yet the fretful briar will tell,
He who plucks the sweet shall prove
Many thorns to be in love.

"Briar," a common word for many kinds of thorny creeping plants, refers here to the eglantine. "Prove" is used in the Elizabethan meaning of "to learn by experience." "Sprig" is still excellent English, but is not often used to-day in the pages of poets; it has become somewhat colloquial.

A larger poem, or rather song, contains some similes which you will recognise as having been used many centuries ago by Chinese and Japanese poets. This little song is still sung in England, and it is certainly interesting to find a song that is still popular after its author has been dead two hundred years.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
  Old time is still a-flying
And this same flower that smiles to-day
  To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
  The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
  And nearer he's to setting.

In the poetry of the Far East it is generally the moon that is thus referred to, but the thought is quite the same, and is expressed quite as briefly. I need not cite the whole poem, —not because everybody knows it, but because the other two stanzas are not remarkable. But though the imagery be oriental in a way, the melancholy is not. It is the melancholy of the old Roman poets, of Catullus and Horace especially, whom Herrick studied and imitated very successfully.

They felt, as we feel in the East, the sadness of the impermanency of life; but being of a naturally joyous character, this feeling only stimulated them to enjoy life as much as possible. Let us eat and drink and love, for tomorrow we die—that was the philosophy, the common sense philosophy, of the antique world; and the old Greeks had it too. There is preserved a curious Greek epitaph, which seems strange to modern minds, but which faithfully expresses the same conception of life. "Thou hast eaten of the banquet; thou hast taken thy fill; there is no reason for regret." In another poem of Herrick's, which you will find in almost any collection of English lyrics—"Corinna's Going A-Maying"—there is a verse of the same kind which is worth quoting in this connection.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time.
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun;
And, as a vapour or a drop of rain
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
So when you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying!

This is paganism, pure and simple; but it is also the paganism of the Renaissance. It appears in the famous song of Lorenzo de Medici, beginning—

Fair is youth and void of sorrow,
But it hourly flies away

—which you will find so often quoted in literary history. Indeed the greater part of Herrick's poetry is altogether pagan, but the paganism is of a very healthy kind. When

he speaks of death or of the future, he never speaks like a Christian priest, but always like some old Roman or Greek philosopher,—not of course a great philosopher, like Plato, or like Lucretius, but like a student of epicureanism. Here we have a song about what becomes of the body of man after he is dead; there is not even the shadow of a Christian thought in it—it might have been written by a thorough materialist.

You see this gentle stream that glides,
Shoved on by quick succeeding tides;
Try if this sober stream you can
Follow to the wilder ocean;
And see if there it keeps unspent
In that congesting element.
Next, from that world of waters, then
By pores and caverns back again
Induct that inadulterate same
Stream to the spring from whence it came.
This with a wonder when ye do,
As easy, and else easier too,
Then may ye recollect the grains
Of my particular remains,
After a thousand lustres hurled
By ruffling winds about the world.

But with this affectation of pagan sadness we find a very good and vigorous optimism in Herrick. If he is sad at moments when thinking about old age and death, he is never sad in the presence of misfortune. Once when he found his sight beginning to fail, he wrote a poem on the subject; again when friends and relations died, he made the most cheerful verses upon their loss. Real unhappiness he never allowed himself to have. What better way of meeting trouble could we imagine than that implied in the following verses addressed to "Fortune":

Tumble me down, and I will sit
Upon my ruins, smiling yet;
Tear me to tatters, yet I'll be

Patient in my necessity.
Laugh at my scraps of clothes, and shun
Me, as a feared infection;
Yet, scarecrow-like, I'll walk as one
Neglecting thy derision.

The man who can defy misfortune after this fashion is naturally the man who, in spite of his love of life, knows how to be content with very little. All his life Herrick lived upon very little, and knew how to enjoy himself without money. He has described for us in a famous verse the manner in which he lived—enumerating all his small possessions:

Though clock,
To tell how night draws hence, I've none,
A cock
I have to sing how day draws on.
I have
A maid, my Prew, by good luck sent
To save
That little Fates me gave or lent.
A hen
I keep, which, creeking day by day,
Tells when
She goes her long white egg to lay.
A goose
I have, which with a jealous ear
Lets loose
Her tongue to tell that danger's near.
A lamb
I keep (tame) with my morsels fed,
Whose dam
An orphan left him (lately dead).
A cat
I keep that plays about my house,
Grown fat
With eating many a miching mouse.
To these
A Tracy I do keep whereby
I please
The more my rural privacy.

Which are
But toys to give my heart some ease;
Where care
None is, slight things do lightly please.

How he could keep from being sometimes melancholy, except in his verses, we can understand from a little bit, "The Rhymed Advice" which he gives to his readers—certainly the best possible advice of its kind.

In all thy need be thou possest
Still with a well-prepared breast:
Nor let the shackles make thee sad;
Thou canst but have what others had.
And this for comfort thou must know,
Times that are ill won't still be so.
Clouds will not ever pour down rain;
A sullen day will clear again.

For Herrick's philosophy we have said enough in quoting these little pieces; it was simply the philosophy of mother wit, which is perhaps the best philosophy of all as a guide in life.

Of course you will see that one who could be always content with the country, with the simplest of food, and with the dumb companionship of cats and dogs and other little animals, could not care very much for the vagaries and the conventions of fashion. Herrick lived in ages of fashion, he was the last of the Elizabethans, he witnessed the time of the Cavaliers,—and after the days of Cromwell he saw the luxury of the Restoration. But he liked nature and truth; and his dislike of the artificial in the habits and customs of his epoch inspired one little verse, now famous, from which many nineteenth century poets, including Moore, have found inspiration. It is entitled "Delight in Disorder."

A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness;
A lawn about the shoulders thrown

Into a fine distraction:
An erring lace which here and there
Enthrals the crimson stomacher:
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbons to flow confusedly;—
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat;
A careless shoestring, in whose tie
I see a wild civility:
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

The poet speaks here out of his heart without deeply thinking, but he utters a very deep esthetic truth, which all great artists have recognised from ancient times. Dress ought to be only a means of enhancing natural beauty—of calling attention to it; and when the dressing is too exquisite, too correct, the attention is drawn away from the beauty of the person to the beauty of the clothes. Moreover, under such circumstances, you perceive that the woman wants her clothes to be admired, which suggests a very unsubstantial character. Again, it is quite true that a slight appearance of carelessness or indifference in female dressing has its moral as well as its esthetic charm. You say to yourself, on observing it, "That girl does not wish to be too much admired," and this idea pleases; it implies a certain modesty of disposition. But Herrick does more than utter truth here; he shows a most esthetic ingenuity in the use of words. "A winning *wave* in the *tempestuous* petticoat," is simply delightful in its comparison of the undulations of a woman's dress to the motion of the waves. Of course you know that the dress of western women has for thousands of years—that is to say, from old Greek times—been contrived upon a plan almost exactly opposite to that of the dress of women of the Far East. The dress of Japanese women fits loosely above and closely below the hips. The dress of a western woman fits tightly above and loosely below; and consequently the lower part of the dress *undu-*

lates—that is to say, makes wave-like motions when she walks. And whereas the eastern woman steps from the knee, the western woman steps from the hip, so that her body swings somewhat as she walks, and her robe swings at the same time alternately to left and right. Herrick has another little poem on this subject in which he shows the same genius in using curious words—or, better, in the curious use of words:

> Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
> Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
> The *liquefaction* of her clothes.
>
> Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
> That *brave vibration* each way free;
> O how that glittering taketh me!

By "glittering" we may understand the shining of the silk; the poet is equally charmed by the light and by the motion of the robe. I do not think that you will find in any English poem the same use—extraordinary use—of the word "liquefaction." But no other word could be used with such wonderful effect. To-day the proper meaning of this word is melting, turning into liquid; but Herrick gives it something more of the Latin meaning, which is wider than the modern English meaning. "Vibration" here has the sense of libration—a swinging from right to left, an oscillation like that of the pendulum of a clock. "Brave" in the language of Herrick's time did not simply mean courageous; it meant much more often "splendid." It is by little touches like this that the student learns to like Herrick, but it requires a certain amount of patience to find these beauties in the great mass of verses which he wrote.

I only want to interest you a little in certain verses of Herrick's. You will find many other verses of his in different collections of English poetry. He is well known to students through certain poems of praise addressed to Ben

Jonson, whom he knew and loved; also through poems about old English country games, holidays, and superstitions—few of which could interest you. My hope is that you will see how much real literary merit may be found in his little pieces about flowers and women and simple country life. There is only one other class of his poems to which I wish to invite your attention; that is the religious poem. At times this curious man imagined himself a great sinner, and expressed regret that he had written so many naughty poems which a clergyman should not have written. When these fits of remorse came upon him, he would ease himself by writing religious poetry—sometimes good, sometimes very bad. But when his religious poetry is good, then it is worthy of very high praise in English literature; and it is marked by the same qualities of simple beauty which distinguished the best of his secular poetry. One poem of the religious class is all that I intend to offer you, but I am inclined to believe that you will like it. It is called "The White Island"—

In this world, this isle of dreams,
While we sit by sorrow's streams,
Tears and terrors are our themes
Reciting:
But when once from here we fly,
More and more approaching nigh
Unto young Eternity
Uniting:
In that whiter island, where
Things are ever more sincere;
Candour here, and lustre there
Delighting:
There no monstrous fancies shall
Out of hell an horror call,
To create (or cause at all)
Affrighting.
There in calm and cooling sleep
We our eyes shall never steep;
But eternal watch shall keep,
Attending

Pleasures, such as shall pursue
Me immortalised, and you;
And fresh joys, as never too
Have ending.

This has been very much admired, and justly, because of the simple and beautiful way in which great faith and hope are expressed. I suppose you know that it is said nobody sleeps in heaven. Sleep is the result of the withdrawal of the sun's light; but in a world without night (and modern astronomers tell us that there are really such worlds lighted by two suns instead of one), there would be no sleep. The adjective "white" to signify luminous or shining is not common as Herrick uses it, but it is very beautiful and scientifically very true, so far as our knowledge of the highest form of luminosity is concerned.

A curious thing about Herrick is the way in which the man remained always outside of his own century. He was in poetry, although we call him a Caroline poet, the very last of the Elizabethan writers; he was born a little too late to feel quite at home in the new order of things. Therefore he would never mix with it. And he never even tried to.

He was content to live alone in his little country village, and to remain poor, although he might have been rich, rather than lose that independence of thought and custom which he loved, and which belonged not to his time but to "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." All about him the world was shaking as with earthquake,—and he scarcely knew it; he half awoke for one moment only, and dreamed again. The king and the parliament were at war—he heeded not. The king was defeated, captured, tried, condemned and executed; yet Herrick, who really loved the king, scarcely understood what was really going on. He was first fully awakened only when the Puritan government sent its officer to turn him out of his little country home. Then he went with regret to the metropolis and wrote poems there to con-

sole himself, until Charles the Second came to restore him to his parsonage. After that came the days of the Restoration, the days of wicked drama and wicked morals, the days when England was suffering from something much worse than civil war—something that might be described as a moral earthquake. Milton argued and wrote and died; a new materialistic philosophy appeared; everything changed, and seemed in danger of changing for the worse. But Herrick never troubled himself in the least about all these things. He continued in his solitude to write little verses about bees and butterflies and honey and kisses of girls and the gods of Greece and Rome and the customs of Christmas and of May-day. So he lived and died, entirely apart from his own time. And perhaps this is why we like him so much. In an age of corrupt hearts, he kept the joyousness and simplicity of a child—sometimes of a naughty child, but never of a very bad child. He kept close to nature in his best moods, when the fashionable world had already begun to desert nature, and to prepare the way for the artificial falsity of the eighteenth century. And I think that it is for this reason also that Herrick remains the only Caroline poet worthy of close study by Japanese students. Of course there are other great poets of the time—such as Donne and Crashaw and Carew—men who lived when Herrick lived, and who followed to some extent Elizabethan traditions. They are great in a certain way; but they are much less important for your particular studies. The English language has changed very much since those times, and therefore very few writers of the latter part of the sixteenth or the early part of the seventeenth century can be recommended to you. But in Herrick's particular case, the language has changed but little. His simplicity of heart kept his style so pure and his language so vital that you can read him to-day with advantage to your knowledge of English. I could not say this even about the great poet Milton. A careful study of Milton would be likely to do you more

harm than good. A careful study of Herrick could only do you good—and that in the best of all directions, in the study of daintiness of feeling united with perfect simplicity and clearness of expression.

CHAPTER VIII

BERKELEY

SOME knowledge, however slight, of the great eighteenth century thinker, George Berkeley, ought to be of some use to the student of English literature, who is obliged to be also a student of English thought. He belongs, both by his literary qualities and his philosophical powers, to the very first place among the men of his age; and this would be a sufficient reason to make him the subject of a separate lecture. Besides, at this time, when the charge of materialism is being foolishly made by many thoughtless people against the rising generation of Japan, and the tendency of our time is said to be towards the destruction of all religion, it is especially important that every student should know the relation between Berkeley and the great oriental philosophers whom Berkeley never read. Exactly the same charges were brought against the views of this great man that have since been brought against other thinkers too profound for the ignorant to understand. Every one who does not express his assent to commonplace ideas about the nature of man and of the universe, is likely to be thought either irreligious or heretical. Berkeley had to meet this kind of opposition, and he met it after a fashion that still commands the respect of thinkers, but necessarily calls forth the ridicule of ignorant people. Even Byron, liberal as he was in other matters, proved too shallow to appreciate the greatness of Berkeley, as he showed by the jesting lines

> When Bishop Berkeley said there was no matter,
> It was no matter what he said.

But on the contrary, what Berkeley said proved to be of the very greatest importance to western thought; and he must

be considered as a most valuable factor in the development of English philosophy.

Let us first say something about his life; for personally he was one of the most charming men that ever lived—who never made an enemy, and secured, not merely the friendship, but the adoration of men the most jealous and the most irritable of the time. Pope, who had so few friends, said that Berkeley possessed "every virtue under heaven." The terrible Swift worshipped him. Addison and Steele thought him worthy of all admiration. Nor was he thus loved only in his own country, but even on the continent, where he traveled.

Berkeley was born in Ireland in 1685, and educated at the best schools there, finishing his course at the famous Trinity College of Dublin, of which he became an M.A., tutor, fellow, and Professor of Greek, in addition to holding an important office in the direction of the university. Here his mind was formed, first by the study of Locke, afterwards by the study of Plato. At the university he wrote his first works. Resigning his position, and going to London, he at once became a universal favourite in the best society by reason of his amiability, his great learning, and, last, not least, his remarkable beauty; for he was one of the handsomest men of his age. We next hear of him, after a course of travel in Europe, appointed to the church dignity of Dean of Kerry, a very lucrative position. Then we hear of him before the English Parliament, arguing so eloquently on the advantages of founding an ideal university in the West Indies, or at least in the Bermuda Islands, that the Parliament forgot its common sense and voted twenty thousand pounds towards the establishment of the imagined institution. Afterwards the project was wisely abandoned; if it had not been, it would have proved, like the university of Tennyson's "Princess," only a beautiful dream. The incident is worth mentioning simply to show how Berkeley could fascinate and charm men by his manner and by his

earnestness. As for himself, he determined to go to America in any event. Perhaps he wanted to be left alone, in order to study, and felt that America was the best place for this, because in England or Ireland society wanted him —wanted to pet him, caress him, to make him rich, to give him great positions of honour which would have allowed him no opportunity to think or to write. He went to America in 1729, to the neighbourhood of Rhode Island, where he remained for three years. Even there he interested himself in education; and he was one of the first to assist in the prosperity of the now famous Yale College. After returning to England, he hoped to obtain the quiet which he needed, and expressed his wish to live in some very retired place. King George II loved him, and sent him word that he must become a bishop whether he liked it or not, but that otherwise he might live wherever he pleased. In 1753 he died one of those painless and beautiful deaths to which we give the name of euthanasia. The whole of his life was without blame of any sort, and few men have been so universally regretted.

Now we shall turn to the subject of this man's philosophy. His great work was the destruction of materialism. Since the day of Berkeley, there has been no real materialism among thinkers. He made that impossible. He made mistakes undoubtedly; but he also made great discoveries— which may not seem discoveries to you, because Berkeley's views had been anticipated by thousands of years in India, but which were very new to Englishmen in the time when he made them.

What materialism did he destroy? Let us consider what materialism means. In the first place, it may be argued that we know the world only as matter, and that everything which we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste is matter. This can be granted, provisionally. Then it can be argued that we know nothing about mind except in its relation to matter; that we have no evidence of an immaterial man or

ghost; that all phenomena can be explained by material facts. This, again, may be provisionally accepted. Granting that we know, outside of ourselves, nothing but matter, there can be very little question as to what becomes of religious faith. For a long time in England and in France cultivated men had been content with this position. They never suspected that they were stopping short in their investigation. Eighteenth century scepticism rested upon the assumption that everything must be explained by matter and by the forces inherent in matter. But it was rather startling to be asked all of a sudden, "What is matter? What do you know about it?"

Even while a student at the university, Berkeley had perceived that if you carry out the materialistic argument to its full conclusion, materialism itself must disappear. The great strength of the materialistic argument was that men should rely for evidence of any belief upon the testimony of their senses. Nobody had then seriously questioned the value of the testimony of the senses, except Locke, about whom we shall have more to say presently. Berkeley was the first to deny boldly all the testimony of the senses, while Locke denied only a part of it; and this position of Berkeley is, in the main, very powerfully sustained by the science of our own time. To quote Huxley's words, the great discovery of Berkeley was "that the honest and rigorous following up of the argument which leads us to materialism, invariably carries us beyond it." In short Berkeley proved to the world, as Schopenhauer would say, that under every physical fact there is a metaphysical fact.

Before Berkeley, Locke had been examining the theory of sensation, and had been treating it after a fashion decidedly remarkable for the eighteenth century. A short quotation will serve to show what I mean. He says: "Flame is denominated hot and light; snow, white and cold; and manna, white and sweet, from the ideas they produce in us;—which qualities are *commonly thought* to be the same

in those bodies; that those ideas are in us, the one the perfect resemblance of the other as they are in a mirror; and it would by most men be judged very extravagant if one should say otherwise. And yet he that will consider that the same fire that at one distance produces in us the sensation of warmth, does, at a nearer approach, produce in us the far different sensation of pain, ought to bethink himself what reason he has to say that this idea of warmth, which was produced in him by the fire, is actually in the fire,—and his idea of pain . . . is not in the fire. Why are whiteness and coldness in snow, and pain not, when it produces the one and the other idea in us; and can do neither but by the bulk, figure, number, and motion of its solid parts?"

Locke thus shows very clearly his conviction that impressions received through the senses have little or no resemblance to that which causes them. Modern science tells us the same thing,—and tells it to us much more positively than Locke does. I quote from Professor Huxley: "No similarity exists, nor indeed is conceivable, between the cause of the sensation and the sensation." But you will observe that Locke makes a distinction. He speaks of bulk, figure, and motion, as real, although pain, colour, etc., exist only in the mind. The fact is that Locke had not gone nearly so far as modern science. He went only half way. He made a distinction between what he called the primary and secondary qualities of matter. The secondary qualities according to Locke would have been colour, sound, smell, taste, warmth, cold, etc.; and these he said had no existence outside of the mind. But the primary qualities he believed to exist outside of the mind. These were extension, figure, solidity, motion, rest, and number. Now we come to the great difference between him and Berkeley. Berkeley said that even these primary qualities had no existence outside of the mind. In the sense that he meant, he is unquestionably right, so far as contemporary science is authorita-

tive. At least we must put the fact as positively as Huxley puts it,—that the existence of what Locke called primary qualities is utterly inconceivable in the absence of a thinking mind. It is, however, one thing to say that we can know nothing of ultimate reality, and another thing to say that the ultimate reality of matter does not exist, But Berkeley said it. He took the bold position that nothing exists except mind. Here science partly supports him, but not exactly in the way that he would have wished. That mind and matter are both but different phases of a single reality is as boldly stated by Herbert Spencer as it was by Berkeley, but upon other premises. Spencer will not tell you that matter has no existence. He says only that it is known to us merely as phenomenon, and that it can not consequently be really cognisable, as to its ultimate nature, by the senses. But the difficulty which Berkeley less successfully attempted to avoid by simply denying all reality, Spencer meets by laying down what he calls the truth of "transcendental realism,"—that is, of a reality in phenomena which we must believe in without being able to understand. Nevertheless it should not be supposed that even here Berkeley and Spencer are in very strong opposition, because Spencer says that "the test of reality is persistence." And as nothing phenomenal in the universe is eternally persistent, all things are unreal in the sense of being impermanent. A cloud is real; but it is transitory; and its reality is thus only a phenomenal reality. In short, we must understand Spencer's position to be that except as phenomenon the universe is unreal. We know of it only as the result of a play of forces.

Berkeley first put forth his views in an essay called "Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision." This little book was written to prove the unreality of sight, to show that we see in the mind only what we imagine to be outside of the mind. The essay might have been called "On the Illusion of Sight." In a subsequent work entitled "Treatise Con-

cerning the Principles of Human Knowledge" he extended this theory of illusion to the other senses—hearing, touch, taste, smell. In his third and greatest book, "The Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous," he proclaimed his whole position—that nothing exists outside of the mind. All that we imagine we perceive by the senses, we perceive really within the brain only; and we have no proof of any reality outside of ourselves in the material sense. What we call the universe exists only, in the same way, in the mind of God; and what we know or feel is only the influence of His power upon ourselves.

Being a Christian, Berkeley could not go any further than this. And even this was going rather far—because if you follow out Berkeley's reasoning to its conclusion, the result is pantheism. Again it never occurred either to Berkeley himself, or to those with whom he argued, that the same reasoning might be used to prove the non-existence of mind. Berkeley said to the materialists: "You declare that there is nothing but matter and motion; now I shall prove to you that you know nothing of matter or of motion, and that you can not give any evidence to me that they exist." But had there been upon the other side a reasoner of equal power, that man might have answered: "Very well; but if all things exist only in the mind of God, we ourselves also are but shadows within that mind, and have no real existence."

We see at once that Berkeley could not have ventured to sustain such a position as that. He had already proclaimed the existence of souls, indivisible and immortal. This declaration was nothing more than a declaration of faith. It was not philosophy and it was in strong contradiction to his views elsewhere expressed. But no one thought of attacking him with his own weapons until a much more recent time. In our own day Spencer has torn to pieces some of his reasoning, and other scientific men have pointed out his mistakes. Nevertheless one half of

his philosophy remains, and will always remain, unassailable.

To find the other half we must go to the East. Hundreds of years before Berkeley, a great Indian thinker had thought out everything that Berkeley had thought, but had also thought much more. He did not stop at the question of soul. He declared matter non-existent, and the universe a dream; but, much more consistent than Berkeley, he declared also that the matter perceiving the dream was equally unreal.

"Strange," exclaims Huxley, "that Gotama should have seen more deeply than the greatest of modern idealists." He might also have said, "Strange that, without any knowledge of modern science, he should have seen quite as deeply as the greatest psychologists of the nineteenth century!"

The difference between Berkeley and the founder of the Buddhist religion was only the difference imposed upon Berkeley by his religious training. Could we imagine a meeting of the two men, and the conversation between them, we might suppose that the Indian teacher would say to the English bishop: "You have great perceptions of truth; but it is a one-sided truth. You have not yet obtained the supreme enlightenment. Matter, indeed, has no existence; but neither has what you have been imagining to be mind. The mind, which you call soul, is quite as unreal as matter. It is only a mass of sensations, volitions, ideas, as impermanent as the dew on the morning grass. All that you call soul is impermanent; and all that you call knowledge springs from some form of touch, and touch itself is an illusion. There is but one reality behind all this; but you never will be able to perceive that reality until you learn that soul 'indivisible and immortal,' as you call it, does not exist, and could not possibly exist. Come and be my disciple."

One of the most astonishing texts of the Buddhist litera-

ture, that which declares that all knowledge springs from touch, has been first fully confirmed by western science within our own century. I am referring to the actual discovery that the senses—sight, hearing, taste, and smell—have all been developed from the skin. The eye, the ear, the tongue, even the brain itself have been proved to grow and evolve from an unfolding of the body's covering. Thus, everything of sensation, and therefore of knowledge, originally sprang indeed from touch. And now if we accept, as we must, the statement that touch itself is illusion in the meaning of Berkeley, we find that the position of the eastern teacher is incomparably stronger than that of the eighteenth century idealist. But upon one point, and that the most important ethically, the two are one. There is but a single reality, transcending all human knowledge, and human life and conduct must be regulated in a code with such perceptions as we can obtain of the only true and everlasting law. The antagonism of the two systems is really only in minor details; in the deeper thoughts of both there is absolute harmony—only it must again be pointed out that the greater mind was not the European.

And what is the latest position of modern science on the subject of human knowledge? We have really advanced no whit further than the position taken by Berkeley and by Descartes. Descartes said that we know a great deal more about mind than we do about matter; and summing up all the modern evidence in relation to the nature of things, Huxley declares that the more elementary study of sensation justifies Descartes' position, that we know more of mind than we do of body; that the immaterial world is a firmer reality than the material. Nevertheless the same writer is obliged to declare that it is merely a question of comparative ignorance, for coming to the ultimate question, we can not conceive either of a substance of mind nor of a substance of matter; and the phenomena called by either name are essentially impermanent. All human

knowledge applied to the question of ultimate reality, amounts to absolutely nothing.

Now the greatness of Berkeley's intellect is proved by the fact that he reasoned out all this when he was only a student at the university, and in an age when science was only beginning. Even if we can not grant that his brain was equal to the magnificent Indian brain that saw further and deeper thousands of years before him, we must at least acknowledge him one of the greatest of European minds. He achieved a great deal in preparing the way for the larger thought of future generations. Hume took up and developed and fixed for all time some of his best thought; then came the great evolutional school with a new philosophy, and marvellously developed sciences to complete, not only what Hume had left undone, but to go back also to Berkeley, and test his reasoning, and find it among the greatest achievements of the human intellect. Again in a merely ethical way Berkeley did a great service. He prevented free thought from becoming shallow, just as much as he supported Christian beliefs. In fact more so. Naturally he wished to attack free thinking, without which there could have been no great religious progress; but he really did it a service. After him no great thinker could affect materialism in the sense that it had been affected previously. We still have the word materialism, loosely applied by uneducated people to any opinions at variance with a belief in orthodox dogma; but the materialism of the seventeenth century—the real materialism, involving a belief in matter as reality—shrivelled up and vanished from the time that Berkeley struck it. It was not a belief worth regretting, for it would have kept the human mind within very narrow limits, somewhat as winter-ice confines and checks the flowing water. The work of Berkeley was like a generous thaw, freeing the European intellect from old trammels, and hastening its progress toward the larger thought of the present time.

To literature Berkeley's service was chiefly that of aiding the cultivation of an exquisite taste. He wrote English of great simplicity and clearness, through his ambition to imitate as far as possible the beautiful strength and lucidity of Plato; and he brought into English something very much resembling the fine quality of the Greek philosopher.

CHAPTER IX

POE'S VERSE

THERE is very little of Poe's verse; yet he has been called, by the greatest English critics, the only real American poet. There is very little of it; yet scarcely a single poet of the Victorian age has altogether escaped its influence. We can find traces of Poe in almost every one of the greater poets of our time, as well as in the host of minor poets.

One of the reasons for this influence was certainly that wonderful sense of the values of words, of their particular colours and sounds, of their physiognomy, so to speak, which Poe shared with the greatest masters of language that ever lived. His instinct in this direction led him especially toward the strange, the unfamiliar, the startling; and he was able to produce effects of a totally unexpected kind. Even when he shows the inspiration of some older poet, he invariably improves upon what he takes. Perhaps you remember Byron's famous lines about passion:

> The cold in clime are cold in blood;
> Their passion scarce deserves the name;
> But mine was like the raging flood
> That boils in Ætna's breast of flame.

This comparison of a lover's blood to lava is so strong that one might well doubt whether the extravagance of speech in describing passion could be pushed any further. Perhaps Poe was the only poet of the age who could have pushed it further, and who did. Undoubtedly he was inspired by Byron's lines; see how he transforms and enlarges the whole fancy—

> These were days when my heart was volcanic
> As the scoriac rivers that roll,
> As the lavas that restlessly roll

Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole,
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek,
In the realms of the boreal pole.

This strikes us at once as a much more extravagant utterance than Byron's, but it does not shock; on the contrary it fascinates us by its strangeness and its grotesque force. Moreover, it explains itself at once by reason of this fantastic strangeness. We know that the utterance is not that of a perfectly sane man; this is madness. The poem is intentionally mad; it is a description of nightmare horror—horror and fear of the unseen; and the speaker, being wild, uses only wild similes and exaggerations. Yet there is a grandeur in these images, as there often is in great madness—the madness of genius. Now Poe alone had the skill to do these things, to make the extravagant and the extravagantly terrible a source of art and pleasure.

But it was not only the novelty of his fancy and the queer power of his language that made him so influential. He introduced new ideas of melody into verse, especially by what has been called the "repetend." This word, formerly used only in mathematics, has now the signification in literature of the artistic repetition of lines or phrases, partly with a view to the intensification of some new fancy. Yet the repetend is not exactly repetition; it is repetition with modification. The line is repeated almost in its first form, but not quite so, and the slight change deepens the effect. You have good examples of repetend in the verse above quoted; lines two and three form one example of repetend; and lines five and seven form another repetend; while lines four and six constitute yet another form of repetend. I did not quote you a whole stanza. The entire stanza contains another repetend, which would make four repetends in ten lines. At some future time I must speak to you about another form of this art, very ancient, for it is a general characteristic of the great Finnish epic, the Kale-

vala. But the principle of repetition in the Kalevala is very primitive and simple, childishly simple, compared with the repetend as devised by Poe. His methods in this way were so original that they might almost be called discoveries or inventions. The poem from which I quoted is not even the most remarkable example of this kind of work. Please observe this fact: all the really famous verses of Poe, all the compositions which made him celebrated as a poet, are constructed with a profusion of repetitive phrases.

There are not very many great poems, at that, though I have used the adjective all. I should name "The Raven," "The Bells," "Ulalume," "Annabel Lee," "Eldorado," "Israfel," "The Haunted Palace," and "Dreamland," as more especially striking in this repetitive art. "The Bells" is the most astonishing feat of all, for it consists almost entirely of repetends. But even where Poe is least fantastical and most classic, he scarcely ever gives up entirely the use of repetition. There is one exception, the exquisite invocation. "To Helen"—

> Helen, thy beauty is to me
> Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
> That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
> The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
> To his own native shore.
>
> On desperate seas long wont to roam,
> Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
> Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
> To the glory that was Greece,
> And the grandeur that was Rome.
>
> Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
> How statue-like I see thee stand,
> The agate lamp within thy hand!
> Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
> Are Holy Land!

Written when the poet was only fourteen years old, this remains one of the treasures of English poetry, but it is much

less widely known than "The Raven," "The Bells," "Ulalume," or "Annabel Lee,"—and this because it has fewer of Poe's peculiar characteristics than the others. The charm of the repetend, then quite new, was what immediately caught public attention even in the time of the early Victorian poetry. It was not the extremely delicate fancy about Helen as a living Psyche that could at once catch popular attention; it was such strange music, rather, as the following repetends expressed—

This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

—or,

"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore:
Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore,
Of never—nevermore!"

"The Bells" carries this repetition to the very highest point of art; and here all the repetends are devised especially with a view to phonetic effect. Indeed, I imagine it would not be wrong to call this piece the most sonorous, if not actually the most musical, in the whole of nineteenth century literature. Remember, when I say this I do not mean to declare the poem in all respects superior to any other Victorian poem of equal length, but only in respect to the art of sound, though it is otherwise also very great. We must read it aloud to understand how wonderful it is. The attempt is to represent by the use of words—resonant words—the effect of four different kinds of bells. The first kind are the little sweet sounding bells attached to the harness of horses drawing a sledge over the snow in the holidays of an American winter. This is a merry sound, and all the words chosen express merriment and sparkling

brightness. The next verse deals with the sound of wedding bells—that is to say, the sound of church bells as chimed on the occasion of a wedding. Here all the words are chosen to express rapturous joy, pleasure, softness, sweetness. Next we have the sound of firebells—that is to say, the sharp-sounding bells rung in American cities to announce to the fireman that a fire has broken out. Here all the words are words that clang—words of harsh and violent sound mixed with terms indicating fear and confusion. Last we have the description of the death-bells, the sound of the great bells of a church announcing a death. These are rung very slowly on such occasions; and this slow ring is called tolling or knelling. Here the words are all solemn and terrible at the beginning; but at last they become grotesque. The poet has been seized by the idea of death as triumphing in that sound, and death becomes to him then like a goblin or a ghoul, and he indulges in some strangely fantastic imagery. I think the first three parts are better than the fourth in respect to poetical conception; but in respect to sound it would be very hard to say which is the most wonderful.

Hear the sledges with the bells,
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars, that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

Observe that all these words, or nearly all of them, express what is small and bright as to appearance, little and sweet as to sound. The value of the word "tintinnabula-

tion" was never so well shown before in modern poetry. I need scarcely tell you that it can only be used to indicate the rapid sound of a very small bell; for example, the sound made by the little Japanese insect *Kantan* might very correctly be spoken of as a tintinnabulation.

Now we turn to the sound of wedding bells. Observe how soft and rounded with vowels the words suddenly become.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon.

Oh, from out the sounding bells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the future, how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

Liquid "l's" and "o's" and "u's," but especially l's and o's, prevail throughout this stanza; and the occasional excellent use of sonorous Latin words, such as "voluminously," or of Greek words, such as "euphony," is made to harmonise in the strangest way with the use of simple English words of one syllable, such as "gush" and "wells." Effects of this kind were never even attempted before Poe's day, and they have never since been improved upon. In

the succeeding stanza we have a choice of harsh, wild, or terrible words.

Hear the loud alarum bells,
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled air of night
How they scream out their affright
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping high, higher, higher
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavour
Now—now to sit or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang and clash and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows!
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,–
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells,
Of the bells
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells,—
In the clamour and the clangour of the bells.

These are all horrid sounds or harsh sounds. Of horrid sounds notice such words as "clamorous," "clangour," "clamour," "twanging," "clanging"; and of harsh sounds, the words "jangling," "wrangling," "frantic," "shriek."

Almost every device of sound, whether of alliteration, rhythm, or repetition, is attempted here. To understand the truth of the work, however, you must try to think of the old-fashioned firebells, formerly used in both Europe and America, before the days of electric bells. To-day in America the firebells are rung by electricity; they are not very large, and they do not make a great volume of sound, because it is not necessary to alarm the people any more; the trained bodies of firemen can take care of the city. But in the old days everybody was expected to help in putting out a fire; and the bells were very large, and were rung unceasingly, as hard as the ringers could ring them. The image of the leaping fire, trying to rise to the moon, is very fine; and the adjectives "deaf" and "frantic" are excellently used. I think that Swinburne was influenced by this poem when he wrote the famous line about cruelty deaf as a fire, and blind as night. Why fire should be spoken of as deaf may seem to you strange unless you are accustomed to western poetical imagery, but I think that most of you can feel what it means. The idea is the same as that of the old phrase "deaf to pity,"—that is, as little to be moved by prayers for pity, as if one could not hear them. Elements are of course without senses; and it would be almost platitude to mention the fact, were it not for the value that personification may give it. When you speak of fire being deaf, you at once personify fire, you make it a destroying living force that can not hear; therefore the effect is very terrible.

I shall not read to you the fourth stanza of "The Bells" because in the fourth stanza the effects sought for by the poet are effects of ghostliness and terror rather than of sound; and I am now considering Poe's value especially as a maker of sound. But please to remember one thing about it, namely, that in this fourth stanza "long tones" are especially chosen. The sudden lengthening of the sound indeed gives to the voice a particular tolling and knelling quality

that is very remarkable. However, the verses already quoted will be sufficient to explain to you the strange fascination that this poem has had upon the imagination of all Europe and America for many years.

I have said enough about these devices of Poe—his alliteration, his repetends, his original use of Latin words of many syllables as onomatopœia. There are some other peculiarities to be considered—for example, his revival of old Saxon words in a new sense. For two such revivals he is especially responsible, and even Tennyson was affected by his use of these. When you read in the "Idyls of the King" such phrases as "The weirdly sculptured gate," perhaps you have never suspected that this use of the adverb weirdly was derived from the study of the American poet. There were two words used by the Saxons of a very powerful kind; one referring to destiny or fate, the other to supernatural terror. "Weird" is a later form of the Anglo-Saxon word meaning fate. The northern mythology, like the Greek, had its Fates, who devised the life histories of men. Later the word came also to be used in relation to the future of the man himself; the ancient writers spoke of "his weird," "her weird." Still later the term came to mean simply supernatural influence of a mysterious kind. Poe found it so used, and made it into a living adjective, after it had become almost forgotten, by using it very cleverly in his poems and stories. As he used it, it means ghostly, or ghostly looking, or suggesting the supernatural and the occult. Hundreds of writers imitated Poe in this respect; and now it is so much the rule, that the word must be used very sparingly. It is the mark of a very young writer to use it often.

The other word which I referred to is "ghastly," which differs from ghostly as to spelling by one letter, but as to meaning very greatly. "Ghastly" does not mean ghostly only; it means horrible, to the degree of creating supernatural fear, or horrible to the degree of suggesting death.

In the latter sense Sir Walter Scott, who had studied the old northern languages to good effect, often uses it, as in the lines describing William of Delaraine after his sickness,

> For he was speechless, *ghastly*, wan;

or in the ballad of "Frederick and Alice," describing the light of the dead who

> Rest their ghastly gleam
> Right against an iron door.

But it was not Sir Walter Scott, it was Poe, that first made the word newly arrived and gave it extraordinary vogue. These two words have been so much abused since his time that only a very good writer can afford now to use them. Tennyson has occasionally used "ghastly" like a great master, but always in the manner in which Poe used it. The value of the word, as well as of "weird," really lies in its vagueness. It can be effectively used to suggest a great many different kinds of the terrible or the horrible. In a poem which I am going now to quote to you, you will find it used with great power.

One more value of Poe to be illustrated is the originality of his fancy in the domain of the shadowy and the fearful. There is something fearful in most of his work, but the force of this element is best shown in his awful poem, "The Haunted Palace." The palace is the mind of man, or perhaps of a beautiful woman—long radiant with happiness, then helplessly wrecked. In other words, it is a description of a mind becoming insane. You will not see the real horror until you have read the whole:

> In the greenest of our valleys
> By good angels tenanted,
> Once a fair and stately palace—
> Radiant palace—reared its head.
> In the monarch thought's dominions,
> It stood there;

Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In the sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odour went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene,
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate,
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers now within that valley
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;

While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh—but smile no more.

You will be able to guess some of the similes without explanation. The windows are "the windows of the soul" as English poets sometimes call them—that is to say, the eyes. The palace *door* "with pearl and ruby glowing," is the mouth; you know that poets compare beautiful teeth to pearls, and the red of young lips to roses or rubies. The spirits moving to perfect music are the senses and the feelings in a state of health. The king, born to the purple and sitting upon the throne above the circling of the spirit, is Reason. As the palace, representing the intellect, is said to be situated in a happy valley, we may suppose that the poet means to say that the life described is passed at first in the midst of happy surroundings; but you will do well to remember also that human life in the abstract is sometimes spoken of as a valley. So is the world.

The first part of the poem is thus plain. The second part describes the change. Again we see the two windows, but now they are spoken of as being "red-litten," referring to the bloodshot appearance of the eyes of an insane person. Within, no beautiful spirits are seen, but "vast forms" that move fantastically. These are the fearful fancies of insanity. The music is no longer perfect; it has become a discordant melody—by which is implied that the machinery of reason has become discordant, broken. The king has disappeared—that is to say, reason has departed. The gate—that is, the mouth, is no longer a gate of pearl and ruby; it is pale, like the lips of an insane person. The beautiful echoes described in the first part of the poem as coming through the gate, and signifying the voice, are no longer heard; there come out a "hideous throng," that laugh continually, but never smile. The "hideous throng" means the incoherent talk of the insane; and I

scarcely need remind you that in some forms of terrible insanity the sufferer continually laughs, laughs horribly, but never smiles. The smile, the natural smile, is a sign of gentle happiness. Now if you read the poem over again, bearing these similes in mind, you will see what a terrible thing it is, and how original the fancy of likening the brain of a mad person to a house haunted by ghosts and goblins. There is immense power in these verses, and it is not wonderful that they should have created a terrible sensation.

Now the elements of fear and beauty, as the Greeks anciently established, are essential to great tragedy, and are among the oldest forces of successful literature. Whoever knows how to play upon these two feelings with power, can always be sure of influencing a public. In our own day temporary success has been obtained by relying upon these elements only to make little plays or stories. I suppose that you have heard the name of Maeterlinck. Maurice Maeterlinck is a Belgian writer who has been writing little dramatic romances, which he calls "plays," but which are scarcely long enough or elaborate enough to deserve the title. Some day I shall speak to you more fully about his methods. They are very simple. He does nothing more than excite our fear and pity by placing children or women in terrible situations, often of a ghostly kind. In one play, "Aglavaine and Selysette," he has indeed depended chiefly upon the emotions of love and jealousy, and this is the best; but generally he takes only fear and pity for his motives. These are also the motives in Poe's "Haunted Palace." But Poe's "Haunted Palace" chiefly appeals to terror, ghostly fear; the pity is far off, clouded by the method of the description. With one feeling only, Poe could do more than Maeterlinck can accomplish with several passions. That is the sign of his power. Properly speaking, the more complex an emotion is made, the more powerful it ought to be. Maeterlinck made combinations; Poe did not. Like the great musician Paganini, he could play any tune upon

one string, and these weird tunes which he played in such poems as that we have been reading, affected English verse for many years.

In one respect the horrible element of Poe, the terror, was a revival. It was the old horror of death created during the Middle Ages and quickened to new life by a great artist, who had freed himself from all definite religious beliefs. The horror of death in the Middle Ages arose from the emphasis through centuries upon the physical side of death, and upon the powers of darkness about the grave. Poe was impressed by the mediæval sentiment regarding death, and he observed that it could be isolated from its old religious relations; he kept the shadows, the mystery, and the horror, without preserving the suggestions of faith. Now the old faith afforded some consolation; without the consolation, such fancies about the grave would have been much more terrible. Poe made them so, and startled his generation by the frightful poem entitled "The Conqueror Worm." Here the drama of life is described in a way that never occurred to any other mind. God and the angels and the whole ghostly universe are represented as watching the play of human existence upon a shadowy stage—somewhat as in Shakespeare's "Hamlet," the king and his court watch the play which the prince ordered the actors to perform. But in this case nobody knows what the play is about, except God himself; the audience must guess the meaning when the play is over. In the last act of the last scene a worm, a grave worm, appears upon the stage.

> But see amid the mimic rout
> A crawling shape intrude:
> A blood-red thing that writhes from out
> The scenic solitude!
> It writhes—it writhes—with mortal pangs
> The mimes become its food.

Then the angels know that the play is the tragedy called "Man," and that the hero of the play is the grave worm.

The horror of the whole fancy is greatly enhanced by the vagueness of the description; nothing is distinct; all is darkly suggestive except the worm itself. Of course the appeal of the poem is pathetic in the supreme degree; it embodies the doubt and the fear and the mystery of the eternal question, "Why do you exist?"

Poe first introduced effectively into English poetry the oriental fancy of "ghouls." Moore had indeed referred occasionally to ghouls, in his "Lalla Rookh"; and Beckford had introduced them in his prose romance of "Vathek." But these two rivals were writing of eastern lands in those works, whereas Poe brought the ghoul into the modern western world of dreams and fears. The ghoul is, in the old Arabian belief, a goblin haunting cemeteries and waste places, digging up the dead and devouring them—sometimes even devouring the living. There is no more unpleasant fancy in Arabian story. That anybody should have been capable of utilising such a fancy in modern poetry would scarcely have been believed before Poe attempted it. He used it very successfully, in a vague way; but not in a way that any one else dared to imitate. He has put a ghoul even into the song of "The Bells." I mention this only by way of introducing the statement that Poe was a most consummate artist in the creation of medley. His mind was mostly Gothic in feeling—Gothic on all its dark side; but he could weave into his Gothic phantasmagoria shapes of Arabic, Egyptian, Italian, Venetian, and even Greek fancy, with the most surprising result. You will find this best exemplified, perhaps, in his prose stories; but it appears also in his poetry. For example, in "Ulalume" you have the dainty luminous figure of the Greek Psyche wandering through the haunted forest inhabited by ghouls and demons; in "The City in the Sea" you have suggestions of Greek and Renaissance architecture worked into a framework of myth belonging to old Hebrew tradition. There are many stories of cities under the sea;

but the last part of the poem, hinting of the Cursed Cities of the Bible, shows how skilfully Poe could blend different epochs together. Now all this and much more which might be mentioned, exemplifies the methods of the romantics in all countries in France, in Germany, and in England. The romantics made new effects by blending many old elements into novel combinations. Poe, however, did this in so individual a way as to give his poetry a character that no other English verse possessed. Small as the bulk of his work is —the very smallest perhaps of any realy great poet—it will repay study of the most careful sort, and no one who makes the study can quite escape the influence of the writer.

In concluding these notes upon the poems of Edgar Allan Poe, it is worth while to comment upon the circumstances that made him such a poet. Remember that he was the son of a law student, who fell in love with a young actress, and gave up his profession and his prospects in order to marry her and become an actor. This romantic union was thus an affair of youthful passion and youthful idealism; both of these persons were affectionately imaginative, and ready to sacrifice everything for an idea. They both died young, leaving their little boy to be taken care of by strangers. The little boy was pretty, delicate, sensitive, imaginative, with the soul of an artist, inheriting the talents of both parents and probably the weaknesses of both. Under happy conditions he would perhaps have produced very different work. But he grew up under the supervision of strangers, in a country where the practical side of life only was esteemed, and the work of imagination treated with little respect. The young man's dreams, ambitions, and tastes, could not be taken seriously. He found himself, after making several blunders in life, doomed to remain without intellectual sympathy. He found no friendships in the dreariness of American city life. He was thrown back upon himself, forced to find consolation and companionship in dreams. This is one of the many cases in which

we may suppose that literature has gained from the unhappiness of the author. Most poets are said to write poetry because they are unhappy; this is not altogether true, though there is some truth in it. But in Poe's case it was true. If he had been placed in fortunate surroundings, with leisure and with money, it is quite possible that he would nevertheless have produced remarkable work of some kind. But certainly, as a happy man, he would not have produced the wonderful prose stories and poems that have given him a unique place in nineteenth century literature, and that have affected and improved the best work of the generations after him both in prose and in verse.

CHAPTER X

ON A PROPER ESTIMATE OF LONGFELLOW

WITHIN the last fifteen or twenty years it has become too much of a practice with the young scholars and many critics to speak disparagingly of the American poet Longfellow, who exercised over Tennyson's generation an influence and a charm second only to that of Tennyson himself. For this sudden reaction against Longfellow, the critics are only partly responsible; the character of the present generation may partly account for it. The critics say what is very true, that Longfellow is only a second class poet, because his versification was never brought to that high point which the greatest poetry demands. But this does not mean that he should not be studied. Second class poetry may often be quite as important in its way as first class poetry; it may possess emotional beauty that the first class poetry can not show. Perfect verse means only perfect form, and form is not the most important quality of poetry by any means. Nevertheless, as soon as it had been shown that Longfellow's hexameters were faulty, young scholars set the fashion of sneering at Longfellow. This fashion has now become rather general; and I want to protest against it. Some of its utterances have been quite unreasonable, not to say unjust. I remember when the great publishers Macmillan brought out a beautiful edition of Longfellow some years ago, several English journals deplored the publication, saying that Longfellow was not worthy to figure in the great series of poets published by that firm. This was utter prejudice and utter nonsense. Except Tennyson, no other poet of the English language had been so much read in England as Longfellow, and I think he will still be read and much

loved, in spite of all sneering, by future generations of Englishmen. It is time to talk about his merits to-day, and to examine the causes of the reaction against him. If you have followed the course of the English literary movement, during the Victorian age, you will recognise that the reaction against Longfellow was almost coincident with the movement in favour of realism. Both in England and America there has been a realistic fashion for some time, a fashion perhaps inspired by the naturalistic movement in France. I can not now dwell at any length upon the subject of realism or naturalism, and I shall only say that the two schools attempted to banish imagination and romance from fiction; they tried the impossible feat of making a literature that should reflect life with the exactness and the ugliness of a photograph. In some respects the realistic movement did good: it corrected much extravagance; it simplified style; it taught the value of restraint, the beauty of severity. But its avowed object was impossible, and that is now generally recognised. There is even already a reaction against the realistic, and this reaction is perhaps the beginning of a new romantic period.

Now during the realistic enthusiasm, it was natural that Longfellow should have been for a moment despised. Of all the poets of the age, none was so completely romantic as Longfellow, so ideal, so fond of the spiritual and the impossible. He is the most dreaming of dreamers, the least real among romantics. But with the present reaction I believe that he will, for this very reason, rise into world-wide favour again. I can not think that genius of this sort can possibly be pushed aside for any length of time, merely because some of his verse happens to be defective in construction.

Now let us speak about the good qualities in his work, and try to discover what its distinguishing characteristic is. He has been for nearly two generations the favourite poet of youth; and there must be a good reason for that.

He has written a great many things which stay in memory forever after you have once read them; and there must be a good reason for that. His appeal, nevertheless, is not an appeal to sense or passion, such as Byron was once able to make. Neither can he be called an innovator such as Sir Walter Scott was; I mean that he had not the advantage of coming before the world with an entirely new story to tell. On the contrary, he is particularly a poet of old thoughts and old customs and old legends. Yet there are very few persons with any taste for poetry who have not been charmed by him in their youth; and if I meet a grown-up scholar to-day, no matter how great, who has read Longfellow during boyhood and now denies the charm of his poetry, I am quite sure that there is something defective in that man's organisation. Very possibly he may be a great mathematician or a great linguist or a great commentator of classic texts, but I am quite sure that he can not have the nature of a poet, the feeling of a poet, the emotions of a poet. He must be more or less of a cold and unsympathising character. Really I believe that it is a very good test of any Englishman's ability to feel poetry, simply to ask him, "Did you like Longfellow when you were a boy?" If he says "No," then it is no use to talk to him on the subject of poetry at all, however much he might be able to tell you about quantities and metres.

Notice particularly this fact about Longfellow, that he is no more an American poet or an English poet than he is a Swedish, Danish, or German poet. Certainly he has written some charming poems of which the subjects and the scenery are American; but the great mass of his poetry refers neither to America nor to England, but to other parts of Europe. Neither were his taste and feelings in harmony with American or English life. It has been well said by the leading English critics of to-day, that to classify Longfellow at all we must put him with the Swedish and Danish poets, not with the English; for his whole feeling is of

the north, of the far north,—the north of the old sagas and runes. You must imagine him as a Scandinavian without Scandinavian hardness, but with the great capacity of that race for idealism and tenderness extraordinarily developed within him.

What I have just said I do not think you will be able to understand fully, because without having had much experience of European differences of character, race-character, you can scarcely comprehend in what the Scandinavian peoples differ from other western peoples. Yet there is one thing which you will certainly be able to understand,—that the freshness of youth remains longer with the man or woman of the north than with the man or woman of the south. At the age of forty a Scandinavian woman may still be very beautiful; at the age of fifty a man may still be considered young. At nineteen or twenty the youth is still a boy; elsewhere he would be a man. And this physical freshness is accompanied by a great freshness also of mind and heart. All this helps to explain a something in northern character that is quite different even from English or German character, and incomparably different from French or Italian character.

Now consider the feelings of boyhood and the thoughts of boyhood as compared with those of mature experience. How beautiful they are! In boyhood we believe everything good about ourselves and about the world. We also believe in other worlds than the present. We see everywhere about us the beautiful, and the future seems full of golden promise. Best of all, in boyhood we do not know our weaknesses, and we believe ourselves able to do thousands of things which we could never really do; we are full of happy confidence. This condition encourages us to dream day-dreams—dreams of glory and power and love and fame, and ever so much that as men we can not dare to think about at all. This happiness and self-confidence and love of dreaming that belongs to youth everywhere,

belongs even to manhood, however, in the far north; it is particularly characteristic of the people there. Gloom and melancholy we often find in them, no doubt, but even in their dark moments they remain idealists, always disinclined to consider the materialistic side of existence. European idealism is almost entirely of the north. Southern races have never been imaginative in the same degree. I have dwelt so long upon this characteristic only because I think that it helps to explain Longfellow's power to charm young men. Always he remained a young man, even when he had passed, long passed, his sixtieth year; his heart and his thought never grew up, though his power as a poet constantly grew. And in his vast reading (probably no modern poet read more than Longfellow) he was eternally seeking and finding subjects or ideas in accord with this beautiful youthfulness of spirit. Therefore he remains, especially among nineteenth century poets, the poet of young men. This alone should establish him in the love of generations to come.

But if you should ask me what particular quality makes the charm of Longfellow, in his work itself, I should answer "ghostliness." There is something of ghostliness in the work of nearly all our great poets, but it is not so frequently met with in such thrilling form as we find it in Longfellow. In his most trifling pieces there is always some suggestion of the spirit behind the matter, the ghost beyond the reality. Now young people always like this, and Longfellow has given it to them better than anybody else. It has been said that he is deficient in music; yet English boys learn his poems by heart, and sing them, and shed tears of delight with the enthusiasm that they excite. Surely this is the best answer to all doubts of his value in melody. He could not have written some of Tennyson's blank verse; he could not have finished a ballad so exquisitely as Rossetti; but I doubt whether these two great poets could have done many things that he has done. For instance, "The Bells of

Lynn." You know that Tennyson wrote a famous line about the "lin-lan-lon" of evening bells. Yet no poem on bells, written since Poe's day, can give such a sensation as Longfellow's "Bells of Lynn."

O curfew of the setting sun! O Bells of Lynn!
O requiem of the dying day! O Bells of Lynn!
From the dark belfries of yon cloud-cathedral wafted,
Your sounds aerial seem to float, O Bells of Lynn!
Borne on the evening wind across the crimson twilight,
O'er land and sea they rise and fall, O Bells of Lynn!

. . . . . .

The distant lighthouse hears, and with his flaming signal
Answers you, passing the watchword on, O Bells of Lynn!
And down the darkening coast run the tumultuous surges,
And clasp their hands, and shout to you, O Bells of Lynn!
Till from the shuddering sea, with your wild incantations,
Ye summon up the spectral moon, O Bells of Lynn!
And startled at the sight, like the weird woman of Endor,
Ye cry aloud, and then are still, O Bells of Lynn!

Lynn is a little town on the coast of Massachusetts, and its old church possesses a fine peal of bells, whose ringing at sundown can be heard to a great distance. The somewhat irregular versification is made in imitation of the chiming of the bells; and the simile at the end of the poem is very fine. The story of the Witch of Endor is from the Book of Kings in the Bible. The King went to her to ask whether he should or should not win a battle that he was going to fight upon the morrow, and she called up the dead to answer him. Then the King was afraid, for he heard from the lips of the dead that he would be killed the next day and his army destroyed. The poet has represented the bells as uttering an incantation—that is, a magical chant, such as can summon up the spirit of the dead, and the moon rises up out of the sea, like a ghost in answer. And then the bells give one more outcry and are silent, as if afraid. Notice also the beautiful use of the participle "shuddering," used here as an adjective. I do not mean to say that this is

great poetry; but it is good poetry, and if you should hear a good reader with a sonorous voice read that poem as it was intended to be read—imitating the clang of the bells—you would perhaps think it a very powerful bit of work.

Everybody knows something about the longer poems of Longfellow—such as "Evangeline" and "Hiawatha," the last being a very successful imitation of Finnish verse, especially of the "Kalevala." But it is not about these that I wish to speak at all; the supreme merit of Longfellow is not to be found in them, though they are beautiful in their own way. The value of Longfellow is that of a composer of hundreds of short poems, short poems of a kind different from anything else written during the age. It is in these short poems that you will especially find the ghostly quality about which I have spoken, and it is by these short poems that Longfellow became a great educator, not only of the American, but also of the English public. By "educator" here I mean a teacher of new beauties and new values and new ideas. Before his time very little was known about the charm of many foreign poets whose work he first either translated or paraphrased. Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Finnish, Russian, and even Persian poetry of the popular school, together with some specimens of Tartar verse—all these were presented to English readers for the first time in a way that could please the mind and touch the heart of the simplest person. How much variety of matter does this range of selection suggest! But this represents only a part of what has been given to us in the short poems. Almost every episode of European history, ancient, mediæval and modern, is represented in these brief compositions. Thousands of young persons were first persuaded to study with interest the old heroic stories of Spanish and German and Norwegian history by reading something about them in the pages of Longfellow. If only for this reason, Longfellow should be more valued than he

would now seem to be. Yet again, his own original work in these directions is not a fourth part of his work in the same direction as an editor. You will find in your library a collection of thirty-one volumes, entitled "Poems of Places" —examples of poetry written about all the famous places in all parts of the world, from England to Japan, from northern Asia to southern Australia. There is no other work of this kind in the English language, and its value can scarcely be too highly spoken of. Almost all the poets of the world are represented there. Besides, you must recollect that Longfellow made perhaps the best metrical translation of Dante that has ever been made in modern times. Surely these productions ought to compel recognition of his importance as an educator in the best sense of the word. And now, turning back to the subject of the ghostly element in his short poems, let us consider together examples of this quality here and there. It infuses the entire mass of his shorter work; yet it has not been at all properly noticed by critics.

I began with one poem about church bells; here is another. It happens to be the last thing he wrote before he died. First I must tell you that the place mentioned is a little town upon the Coast of Mexico. There used to be many monks there, but with the decay of Spanish power, the little town also decayed, and a republican government drove the priests and the monks away, and nothing was left of their work but an old ruined church, which has now almost fallen to pieces. The bells of the church tower, however, remained swinging there, and sometimes when great winds were blowing, the bells would sound in a melancholy way over the sea, out of the dead Spanish town. Longfellow therefore wrote this poem.

What say the bells of San Blas
To the ships that southward pass
  From the harbour of Mazatlan?
To them it is nothing more

Than the sound of surf on the shore,
  Nothing more to master or man.

But to me, a dreamer of dreams,
To whom what is and what seems
  Are often one and the same,—
The bells of San Blas to me
Have a strange wild melody,
  And are something more than a name.

For bells are the voice of the church;
They have tones that touch and search
  The hearts of young and old;
One sound to all, yet each
Lends a meaning to their speech,
  And the meaning is manifold.

They are a voice of the Past,
Of an age that is fading fast,
  Of a power austere and grand;
When the flag of Spain unfurled
Its folds o'er this western world,
  And the priest was lord of the land.

The chapel that once looked down
On the little seaport town
  Has crumbled into the dust;
And on oaken beams below
The bells swing to and fro,
  And are green with mold and rust.

"Is, then, the old faith dead,"
They say,—"and in its stead
  Is some new faith proclaimed,
That we are forced to remain
Naked to sun and rain,
  Unsheltered and ashamed?

"Once in our tower aloof
We rang over wall and roof
  Our warnings and our complaints;
And round about us there
The white doves filled the air,
  Like the white souls of the saints.

"The saints! Ah, have they grown
Forgetful of their own?
  Are they asleep, or dead,
That open to the sky
Their ruined Missions lie,
  No longer tenanted?

"Oh, bring us back once more
The vanished days of yore,
  When the world with faith was filled;
Bring back the fervid zeal,
The hearts of fire and steel,
  The hands that believe and build!

"Then from our tower again
We will send over land and main
  Our voices of command,
Like exiled kings who return
To their thrones, and the people learn
  That the Priest is lord of the land!"

O Bells of San Blas, in vain
Ye call back the Past again;
  The Past is deaf to your prayer;
Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
  It is daybreak everywhere.

The allusion to "the hearts of fire and steel" is to the Spanish soldiers of the old time, fanatical and fearless; the allusion to "the hands that believe and build" is to the pious men who without money built with their own hands the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages. By the "shadows of night" the poet refers to the Middle Ages—which, he notes, were called also "the dark ages," and the entering of the world into light signifies the advent of the present period of intellectual and political freedom.

Is this great poetry? No; but it is beautiful, and it touches the emotions, and it can serve the student in a way that Tennyson's poetry can not serve him—at least, can not so well serve him. I mean that he can suggest to any

Japanese student ideas for poetical composition which he can not find in some still greater poets. For example, the student who has felt the beauty of these verses would be very likely, I think, to write a good poem about a temple bell, deserted and silent, in some secluded place in Japan. He would be tempted to imagine for himself what the old bell would say, if it had a voice and a soul, and could talk. In hundreds of small ways Longfellow can teach you how to make poems of a kind which never have been made before in the Japanese language and which are nevertheless well worth making, because they are close to Japanese feeling. I could choose for you a great number of passages in Longfellow that very closely resemble, in their best qualities, the compositions of old Japanese poets. But I do not think I could do so in the work of Tennyson, who is too English. Longfellow is neither English nor American; at his best he is without nationality and without personal idiosyncrasy. Even when he takes up a foreign subject, with which we can not be naturally expected to feel sympathy, he can make us feel it, by insisting upon some human element that belongs to it. Take, for example, his poem about Peter the Great of Russia, or at least, the spirit of Peter the Great. Do we sympathise much with the known facts of the history of Peter the Great? I do not think we do. And I do not think we can feel any particular reverence for the Russian emperors of later days. Russian emperors may become our enemies; they can not become, in the natural state of things, our friends. But even in England, where the mention of things Russian is likely to evoke expressions of dislike, Longfellow's poem about the great emperor of Russia delighted thousands of people. And this is simply because he made the reader feel for a moment as the Russian peasant feels toward his sovereign—inasmuch as the feeling of loyalty is not peculiar to any one country or time or people. I think you will see the beauty of a few verses.

THE WHITE CZAR

Dost thou see on the rampart's height
That wreath of mist, in the light
Of the midnight moon? O hist!
It is not a wreath of mist;
It is the Czar, the White Czar!
Batyushka! Gosudar!

He has heard, among the dead,
The artillery roll o'erhead;
The drums and the tramp of feet
Of his soldiery in the street!
He is awake! The White Czar!
Batyushka! Gosudar!

He has heard in his grave the cries
Of his people: "Awake! arise!"
He has rent the gold brocade
Whereof his shroud was made;
He has risen, the White Czar!
Batyushka! Gosudar!

Here it is the simple peasant who speaks, the peasant who believes that the spirit of the great dead emperor is still watching over the people, helping them, protecting them, guiding the race to its unknown destiny. In spite of ourselves we are touched by this brute love and childish belief, even in people not of our race, and quite incapable of sympathising with us in many things. But after all, the older and deeper feelings of humanity are the same in all countries. Faith and trust are the same; and Longfellow ever dwells upon them, with the result of creating sympathy for all that is beautiful, independently of language or country.

Several English poets have written great poems about the death of the Duke of Wellington. Tennyson wrote one, which is very famous, and which you have read. Rossetti wrote another. Other poets might seem to have exhausted the subject. But with the exception of those wonderful lines in Tennyson's ode—

Here in streaming London's central roar,
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore,—

I do not think he touches us more than does Longfellow in "The Warden of the Cinque Ports."

A mist was driving down the British Channel,
The day was just begun,
And through the window-panes, on floor and panel,
Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon,
And the white sails of ships;
And, from the frowning rampart, the black cannon
Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hithe, and Dover,
Were all alert that day,
To see the French war-steamers speeding over
When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,
Their cannon, through the night,
Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,
The seacoast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from their stations
On every citadel;
Each answering each, with morning salutations,
That all was well.

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,
Replied the distant forts,
As if to summon from his sleep the Warden
And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,
No drum-beat from the wall,
No morning gun from the black fort's embrasure,
Awaken with its call!

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,
The sun rose bright o'erhead;
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
That a great man was dead.

This was at the time when it was thought possible that the French might try to invade England, and the Duke of Wellington, who had been made Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, had repeatedly warned the government of the possible danger. The Duke died suddenly in the night. I have quoted enough to show the picturesque and solemn beauty, and I have put the last two lines in italics in order to make you think about them. They contain a very fine touch of deep poetry, simple as they seem. After the death of any person beloved, the beauty of the day, if the day happens to be fine, appears to us unnatural; even the sunshine seems cruel. Then we think about—we are forced to think about—how little nature cares for man or his griefs. A great French poet became famous for expressing a kindred thought in a still more touching way. This French poet is Sully-Prudhomme, a member of the academy. Long ago he made a beautiful poem entitled "Les Yeux" ("Eyes"), of which the first verse is very much like the stanza of Longfellow's poem.

Bleus ou noirs, tous aimés, tous beaux,
Des yeux sans nombre ont vu l'aurore;
Ils dorment au fond des tombeaux,
Et le soleil se leve encore!

"Blue or black (*dark* better),—all loved, all beautiful, innumerable eyes have looked upon the dawn. They sleep in the depths of the grave—yet the sun continues to rise!" This is very beautiful, and made the man who wrote it famous even with people who did not know much about great poetry,—because it represented a universal thought, a common thought that is not less deep because it happens to be

common. It is the same thought about the indifference of nature to the pain of man that Longfellow expressed in the poem that we have just read.

Now a very good way of testing Longfellow's value is to compare some of his poems with those of other great poets who have written on the same subject. You will seldom find that he is really great; but you will find that he can touch the heart just as well as the great poets can do, and by very much simpler means. For example take the subject of Belisarius. There are ever so many English poems about Belisarius; there are also French, German, Italian poems about Belisarius. For this story of Belisarius is one of the saddest stories in the whole history of the world, and people have been moved by it wherever it has been read. Perhaps some of you may have forgotten the story itself. Belisarius was one of the last of the great Roman generals (you must remember that in his time the eastern or Greek empire or Byzantine empire had become a Roman empire; and the Cæsars did not live at Rome, but in Constantinople). Belisarius was a great soldier, a great patriot, and a most kindly man. But he had the misfortune to incur the anger of the empress Theodora, who had been a dancing girl, and who was a very unscrupulous empress. She prejudiced the emperor against Belisarius. You will find the whole story fully related in Gibbon; enough to say that Belisarius, who had saved the empire many times from the attacks of the enemy, was most cruelly treated by his imperial master. His wife was taken from him; his property was confiscated; his rank was cancelled; and he was obliged to beg in the streets for his living. In one of the streets a grand arch, a triumphal arch, had been erected to celebrate the very victory which he had gained; and it is said that he used to beg, standing by the arch, of the people who passed by, saying, "Have you not a copper coin to give to blind Belisarius?"—for it is said that he

also became blind. Knowing this sad story, I think you will admire the fine way in which Longfellow represents the thoughts of Belisarius.

I am poor and old and blind;
The sun burns me, and the wind
  Blows through the city gate,
And covers me with dust
From the wheel of the august
  Justinian the Great.

It was for him I chased
The Persians o'er wild and waste,
  As General of the East;
Night after night I lay
In their camps of yesterday;
  Their forage was my feast.

For him, with sails of red,
And torches at mast-head,
  Piloting the great fleet,
I swept the Afric coasts,
And scattered the Vandal hosts
  Like dust in a windy street.

. . . . . .

Like snow-drifts overran
For him, in my feeble age,
I dared the battle's rage,
  To save Byzantium's state,
When the tents of Zabergan
  The road to the Golden Gate.

And for this, for this, behold!
Infirm and blind and old,
  With grey, uncovered head,
Beneath the very arch
Of my triumphal march,
  I stand and beg my bread!

Methinks I still can hear,
Sounding distinct and near,
  The Vandal monarch's cry,
As, captive and disgraced,

With majestic step he paced,—
"All, all is Vanity!"

Ah! vainest of all things
Is the gratitude of kings;
The plaudits of the crowd
Are but the clatter of feet
At midnight in the street,
Hollow and restless and loud!

But the bitterest disgrace
Is to see forever the face
Of the Monk of Ephesus!
The unconquerable will
This, too, can bear;—I still
Am Belisarius!

The splendour of the poem is in this last exclamation. It is like a very famous saying in one of the ancient Greek tragedies, the great tragedy of Medea. Medea has killed her brother to save her husband. She has betrayed her father for the sake of her husband. She has lost her home, her country, her friends for the sake of this husband. He has betrayed her at last, and she is not a woman to bear wrong without revenging it. She will kill the new wife in a most terrible way. She will kill her own children—because they are the children of the man she hates, and because she can best wound his heart by killing them. But the chorus in the play asks her what she will do after that. "What will be left to you, when you have lost parents, brother, friends, home, country, husband, children? What will be left to you?" Then she makes the famous answer that has remained celebrated through all time, the answer of the strong will: "Myself!" She is self-sufficient, she will always conquer. And it is the same thought that Longfellow puts into the words of Belisarius: "I can bear any pain, *because* I am Belisarius—because I know myself greater than all those who persecute me." Nevertheless I must tell you that Belisarius had his weak side. He

loved the wrong kind of woman, who betrayed him with a monk; and when he wished to revenge himself she got the empress Theodora to protect her, and Belisarius was obliged to leave his disgrace unrevenged. Both the empress and the wife of Belisarius, Antonina, had been public dancers before becoming wives, and they helped each other in after times to do much that was wicked. The whole story is very horrible, for the son of Belisarius was most cruelly treated by this unnatural mother. Belisarius, in the poem, very properly observes that the recollection of moral pain is more difficult to bear than the loss of honours, wealth, rank, and even sight. But you will be glad to hear that the best historians do not believe the tradition that Belisarius became blind or was made blind. On the contrary, there is reason to think that he was forgiven by the emperor just before his death. Still, the poet was quite right in choosing the most tragical form of the legend; because he could in this way better manifest the heroism of the man.

Leaving the subject of history, let us take one or two poems of legendary character derived from strange sources. There are no stranger stories in the world than the old Rabbinical stories to be found in the Jewish Talmud. I may mention here that there are two Talmuds—the Jerusalem and the Babylonian, in which the most wonderful stories are; and some of them are believed with good reason to have been taken from the ancient beliefs of the people of Babylon. The Babylonian Talmud is much larger than the other; both have been translated within the last fifteen years—the Jerusalem Talmud into French, and the Babylonian into English. Yet it was not until very recently that there was any popular knowledge of these wonderful books, except such as came to the general reader through the work of a few poets like Longfellow. A vast number of the Talmudic stories are monstrous, or so strange as to be unsuited to modern poetry. But a few of them are very beautiful, with a beauty all of their own; and Longfellow

knew how to pick out these. He selected among others the legend of Sandalphon, and gave to it a new interpretation.

Have ye read in the Talmud of old,
In the legends the Rabbins have told
  Of the limitless realm of the air,
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
  Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the city celestial he waits,
  With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
  Alone in the desert at night?

The angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn, and expire
  With the song's irresistible stress;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
  By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,
  With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands listening breathless
  To sounds that ascend from below—

From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
  In the fervour and passion of prayer;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
  Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
  Into garlands of purple and red;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal
  Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—
A fable, a phantom, a show,
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore,
Yet the old mediæval tradition,
The beautiful, strange superstition,
But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon the angel, expanding
His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps as the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
To quiet its fever and pain.

It is impossible to read the poem once and ever forget it. Not only is it beautiful music; it is one of the most successful of Longfellow's short poems in the beauty of its images and fancies. The man who can not feel the charm of it can not feel at all. Perhaps I had better make a few notes about those thoughts of it which seem to need a little explanation.

The reference to Jacob's dream you will find in the Book of Genesis—he saw in that dream a ladder rising from earth to heaven, and angels going up and down this ladder. The Talmud has many other stories about the ladder, and they say that Sandalphon always stands at the top of the steps. There he receives the prayers of men as they rise up to heaven; and as he touches them they are changed into celestial flowers and are passed on into Paradise, to make beautiful the ways. According to the old legends there were angels for every element,—angels of water and fire, rain and snow, light and heat, angels for each of the seasons, for each of the virtues, for each of the different branches of knowl-

edge. In short, all good or useful things were ruled by angels, and all evil things were presided over by demons. Among the angels of air,—angels outside heaven yet above earth, there were some who died almost as soon as they came into existence—died of happiness after their first song. Such were the angels of fire and of wind; you can see for yourselves the symbolism here, explaining the action of these elements as the action of intelligent life. Fire and wind were to old Jewish fancy, intelligences. But Sandalphon was an immortal angel, always remaining unmoved, busy only with the prayers of men. In the eighth verse I want you to notice the beauty of the suggestion. The poet tells us, "whenever I look out of my window at night, into the clear sky, I fancy that I can see the figure of Sandalphon, standing on the milky way as upon the ladder of light, and spreading out his wings in *nebulous bars*." This is a very fine expression. The word nebulous, you know, means cloudy or vapoury: but here the vapour is the vapour of light. "Bars" signifies parallel lines; so that the phrase "nebulous bars" really means bright vapoury lines. The phrase at once brings before the mind the image of an angel's wing as represented in the old art of the church; the lines, or bars, are of course the lines of wing feathers as seen when the wings are expanded either vertically or horizontally. The last verse may not be so easily understood, for it is a little mystical. You will remember that the fruit of the garden of Paradise, of which man was forbidden to eat, was the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Now, paraphrased, the full meaning of the verse would be: "I feel that this story was inspired by the longing of man's heart for divine love and sympathy —inspired also, perhaps, by the passionate desire of men for knowledge of what never can be known; because the secret of the universe must always be for us the forbidden fruit of Paradise." And the suggestion is that if we did know what we can not know, we might not be so happy even as we are. But we imagine, or want to imagine, that we

know something; and thus these beautiful fables about heaven and angels really help to make us more contented in this world, so long as we can think they are true,—just as fretful children can be made happy by telling them fairy tales. One thing more I should like you to notice—the fine value which Longfellow gives in the seventh stanza to the word "superstition" by placing before it the adjectives "beautiful and strange." This is a classically correct use of the word. Many of you may have thought that the word "superstition" necessarily means something ignorant or vulgar or contemptible in itself; and on the lips of vulgar people it does have that meaning. But the original meaning refers only to a supernatural belief, and the word had a much more generous signification. In any event it is well to observe that much of those beliefs which we call superstitious, are worthy of, not only our respect, but even our affection. Whether they are true or not true, makes no difference at all. They are the foundation of what is poetical and beautiful in literature, in art, and even in religion. But it is not every poet who has the noble courage to speak of a beautiful superstition as Longfellow has done.

Very soft and dreamy are these selections which I have given; and softness and dreaminess and ghostliness make most of the charm of Longfellow. Yet with these tender and almost ethereal ways of utterance he can often wake the strongest kind of enthusiasm. Mere force of words does not always produce forcible effects; the sense of beauty may be more powerful than any recognition of strength, on the same principle that an electric shock may effect even more than the blow of a sledge-hammer. I suppose you have read "The Leap of Roushan Beg"; it is in some of the school texts. The verse is just as soft, as dreamy, as the verse of "Sandalphon"; but the emotion produced is of a very different kind. Roushan Beg was a Kurdish robber who really lived; and there is a collection of Persian poems about him which are even more interesting than the Eng-

lish ballads of Robin Hood. One day a force of cavalry was sent after him by the government, and he had to ride before them. He had the best horse in the world, called Kyrat; and while Kyrat had a chance to run, no other horse could overtake him. The Persian cavalry could not overtake Kyrat. But their leader was very cunning; and he managed the pursuit in so clever a way that Roushan Beg at last found himself following a road that ended suddenly at a precipice. The bridge was gone. What was he to do? With another steed the situation would have been hopeless, but the robber knew his horse. He coaxed him, caressed him, flattered him, in the old Persian way, which is very pretty as the poet tells it, and further has the merit of being almost an exact translation of the real language used, for I had the pleasure of reading the original of the story. It is, I may remark here, a custom with the men of several oriental races to talk to their horse as if they were talking to a person who could understand. Perhaps the horse really does understand sometimes. But is not this pretty?—

Gently Roushan Beg caressed
Kyrat's forehead, neck, and breast;
  Kissed him upon both his eyes,
Sang to him in his wild way,
As, upon the topmost spray,
  Sings a bird before it flies.

"O my Kyrat! O my steed,
Round and slender as a reed,
  Carry me this peril through!
Satin housings shall be thine,
Shoes of gold, O Kyrat mine,
  O thou soul of Kurroglou!

"Soft thy skin as silken skein,
Soft as woman's hair thy mane,
  Tender are thine eyes and true;
All thy hoofs like ivory shine,

Polished bright; O life of mine,
Leap, and rescue Kurroglou!"

Of course we expect the horse to do something grand after having been petted like this; and he does.

Kyrat, then, the strong and fleet,
Drew together his four white feet,
Paused a moment on the verge,
Measured with his eye the space
And into the air's embrace,
Leaped, as leaps the ocean surge.

As the ocean surge o'er sand
Bears a swimmer safe to land,
Kyrat safe his rider bore;
Rattling down the deep abyss,
Fragments of the precipice
Rolled like pebbles on a shore.

It was a clear leap of thirty feet across a chasm hundreds of feet deep. Thirty feet for a horse carrying a man on his back is a great leap; you must remember that in order to make it the horse must really clear a space about thirty-five feet. It has been done, no doubt.

Roushan's tasselled cap of red
Trembled not upon his head,
Careless sat he, and upright;
Neither hand nor bridle shook,
Nor his head he turned to look,
As he galloped out of sight.

Flash of harness in the air,
Seen a moment like a glare
Of a sword drawn from its sheath;
Thus the phantom horseman passed,
And the shadow that he cast
Leaped the cataract underneath.

This is the finest stanza in the poem, and it shows the true genius of poetic fancy. Of course when the horseman leaps the chasm, his shadow also makes the leap—but how many poets would have thought of describing it? It is

this reference to the shadow that makes the scene intensely vivid to the reader. The enemies watching below do not hear the echo of a horse's hoofs far above, as he springs from precipice to precipice; they only see him passing above their heads, and the flash of the rider's armour, quick as the flash of a sword; and they see the shadow of the leaper passing over the cataract below. Here Longfellow takes nothing from the Persian; the description is his own. But this conclusion is from the ancient story:

> Reyhan the Arab held his breath
> While this vision of life and death
> Passed above him. "Allahu!"
> Cried he, "In all Koordistan
> Lives there not so brave a man
> As this Robber Kurroglou!"

And this is exactly what the reader feels after finishing the poem. The emotional power of it is in the contrast, chiefly. The caressing of the horse, with all those poetical phrases, a scene of affection and trust in the face of death, is suddenly followed by the triumph of strength and daring; so that the reader, at first filled with fear and pity, is quite suddenly forced into an attitude of exalted admiration. But it is done, as I showed you, with very soft and simple language, and the use of incidents in contrast is made to do more than any word.

There was a very wonderful French artist, Gustave Doré, of whom you all have doubtless heard. He was perhaps the greatest illustrator of modern times, but he was great in a particular way; he could put soul or spirit into rocks, stones, trees, clouds, and foam of water, so when you look at the clouds in his picture, you see them taking terrible shapes, of dragons, giants, monsters of various kinds —yet they always look like clouds. When you look at the roots of the pine trees, you see them moving like serpents, with heads and eyes and fangs. The forms of his mountains also are forces and bodies; and in the crest and foam of his

waves you can distinguish the shapes of the spirits of the drowned. But he does not ever seem unnatural. When he is painting gloomy scenery, the ghostly suggestion of that scenery is gloomy. But when he is painting beautiful scenery, his spectral fancies are often very charming. He felt nature much as a child feels it,—an imaginative child, who believes that everything is alive and can think. Now every great poet ought to have this childish power of imagination, and to have it very much in the same way that the great French artist had it. Longfellow was not a great poet of the first rank, but he did have this faculty. I could easily show you a hundred proofs by quotation. But a few examples will do. Perhaps you may have read the poem of Sir Humphrey Gilbert. Sir Humphrey Gilbert was really one of the old English navigators, who died in a strange and terrible way. His ship was surrounded by icebergs and crushed in the middle of the night—at least, there is evidence justifying this theory of his disappearance. When he was seen by the people of another ship for the last time, he is said to have exclaimed, on being warned of his danger, "It matters nothing — one can go to heaven by water as well as by land"—and he sat down on deck to read his Bible. It is a famous story, and Longfellow has told it very weirdly. The thing to remark about his treatment of it is that he makes a picture of the icebergs just as Doré might have done. They take life,—become shapes of animated terror.

Southward with fleet of ice
Sailed the corsair Death,

—thus finely begins the poem. Death, so personified, comes from the north as a corsair—that is, a pirate, to pursue Sir Humphrey Gilbert. But it is in the description of the white fleet that the Doresque quality appears.

His lordly ships of ice
Glisten in the sun;

On each side, like pennons wide,
Flashing crystal streamlets run.

His sails of white sea-mist
Dripped with silver rain,
But where he passed there were cast
Leaden shadows o'er the main.

. . . . . .

In the first watch of the night,
Without a signal's sound,
Out of the sea, mysteriously,
The fleet of Death rose all around.

The moon and the evening star
Were hanging in the shrouds;
Every mast, as it passed,
Seemed to rake the passing clouds.

They grappled with their prize,
At midnight black and cold!
As of a rock was the shock;
Heavily the ground swell rolled.

The words are very simple; but several of them are nautical terms, and these give picturesqueness to the verse. "Grapple," you know, is a naval term; also "prize"; also "shrouds"[1] (meaning the upper rigging); also "rake," to scrape or touch in passing. Perhaps "ground-swell" may be a new word to some of you; it means a peculiar motion of the sea,—not from the surface, but from the bottom. Waves made by a ground-swell are terrible as tidal waves, for you can see the surface of the water smooth as glass, but close to shore the waves may be forty or fifty feet high.

Of course, to appreciate the full power of the fancy, one should see icebergs moving. Rising out of the water sometimes to the height of several hundred feet, all aglitter in the sun, they do bear, at a great distance, a strange resemblance to the outline of an enormous ship, with all sails. When the poet speaks of the moon and the evening

star seeming to hang up in the ghostly rigging of the ship of Death, he is only picturing an effect of moonlight in the neighbourhood of an iceberg which many voyagers have noticed. The word "hanging" suggests to us the lanterns of a real ship suspended to the upper masts. In the ice ship the stars of heaven seem to be occupying the place of such lanterns.

Of sea-pictures there are many equally weird scattered through Longfellow, who loved the sea and knew it well. One can never forget, after reading them, such lines as these—

> I remember the black wharves and the slips
> And the sea-tides tossing free;
> And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
> And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
> And the magic of the sea,

or the famous lines about the coming of the storm in the "Ballad of the French Fleet"—

> It came with a mighty power,
> Shaking the windows and walls,
> And tolling the bell in the tower,
> As it tolls at funerals,

or the stanzas describing sea and sky before King Olaf's last battle—

> Louder and louder the war-horns sang
> Over the level floor of the flood;
> All the sails came down with a clang,
> And there in the midst overhead
> The sun hung red
> As a drop of blood.

All through the poems you will find the flashing of surf and hear the murmuring of waves. I think Longfellow was especially a sea poet.

But coming back to the subject of his power of describing inanimate things in the language of animation, I want

to give you an example from the beginning of his famous poem "Evangeline." I do not think that any one who has not been in America could perfectly understand it. There is one part of America where the scenery is unlike almost anything else in the world. It is not such scenery as the tropics can give us; but it is much more weird than anything in the tropics. I mean some of the forest scenery in the southern states, and especially in Louisiana and in Florida. There are extraordinary mosses in those forests —at least, people call them mosses. They are really air plants. When very young they are pale green. When they mature they become silver grey. You do not find them on the ground; they grow only high up, on the trees, and they look like masses of long white hair hanging down from every branch and twig of the tree. Indeed, these mosses look so much like an old man's beard that the French settlers who succeeded the Spaniards in those countries called those mosses by the name of *Barbe Espagnole*, or "Spanish Beard." I have travelled hundreds of miles through American forests hung with this strange kind of moss, making every tree look like a ghost or a goblin. You never forget the sight. Even by day it is uncanny; at night, seen by the torch fire, it is simply awful. Now I have heard Englishmen find fault with Longfellow, because he compared the trees of the primeval forest to old men,—old poets with long white beards.

Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.

I have actually heard that an English critic said that trees covered with moss do not at all look like old men with long white beards. But the person who makes such a criticism has never seen Spanish-moss in American forests. Longfellow could not have made a better comparison. Many of the trees do really look like harpers old—Druids as

they are represented in art,—all wrapped about in long grey garments, and with beards reaching down below their waists.

Do you know the little poem called "The Golden Milestone"? Perhaps some of you may not know the exact meaning of the title. There led into Ancient Rome, from every part of the world, military roads—the best roads that ever were made; and these roads united Rome with no less than eleven hundred great cities. So you could walk from Rome thousands of miles, far into Asia, if you wished to do so; and you could return to Rome by hundreds of different ways. All over these roads stones were set up marking the distances in miles; and all these distances were calculated from Rome or to Rome. But every road ended in the middle of Rome itself; and there, in the heart of the city, was set up the golden milestone from which all distances were recorded.

So much for the title of the poem. You will perceive that there is a beautiful suggestion in it.

Now once on a winter day the poet looks out upon the landscape at sunset and he sees beauty—

> Leafless are the trees; their purple branches
> Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,
> Rising silent
> In the Red Sea of the winter sunset.

You must have studied nature closely to observe the truth of this little picture. Dark objects, as seen against the red line of sunset, often take a purple colour. This makes the poet think of branches of red coral in the sea; and the vast space of crimson light then appears to him like a sea. Presently he notices the smoke ascending from the houses of the country people against the same bright light. The air is very still, so that the smoke goes up straight like a pillar. And he begins to think how every man, when far away from home, remembers the aspect of

his native place, and remembers the smoke rising up from his own roof. Those pillars of smoke, after many years, represent the happiness of his family—the warmth and comfort of the parental dwelling; and, all of a sudden, he remembers the story about the golden milestone of Rome—

> Each man's chimney is his Golden Milestone;
> Is the central point, from which he measures
> Every distance
> Through the gateways of the world around him.
>
> In his farthest wanderings still he hears it;
> Hears the talking flame, the answering nightwind,
> As he heard them
> When he sat with those who were, but are not.

This is an example of the ability to make beautiful poetry out of the commonest sights and sounds. A still better example of the same power is to be found in a poem called the "Ropewalk." A ropewalk, as it is called in America, is a place where ropes are made. It is very pretty to see them made,—but the poet, watching the spinners, suddenly begins to think about what will be done with all those ropes, after they have been sent away and sold. Some of them will be used for swings, for happy children. Some will be used for well-ropes, for drawing water; and the poet sees a girl pulling up a brimming bucket from the well and watching the reflection of her own pretty face in the bucket as she drinks. Some of them will be used for ringing church bells; some of them will be used for ships; some of them used to discover the depth of the sea when a dangerous coast is approached. Some will be used in theatres, as tight ropes for gymnasts to dance upon; and the poet fancies the figure of a tired girl dangerously balancing herself upon a rope in order to amuse the people. And some, alas! will be used in prison to hang people with—which saddens the poet to think of. What a succession of pictures have been suggested to him by simply looking at the labour of the rope maker!

In all these citations from Longfellow and comments on them, I have wanted only one thing—to give you a correct idea of how Longfellow should be fairly judged. He is not a painter in oil colours. He is only an artist in water colours; but so far as poetry can be really spoken of as water colour painting, I do not know of any modern English poet of his own rank who can even compare with him. Think of him, therefore, if you can as one who paints very charming pictures in very charming aquarelle. Secondly, remember that he is a ghost-like story teller. There are many story tellers among the poets of this age, besides the great story tellers of the first rank, such as Tennyson or Rossetti. There was Morris, for example, writing stories in verse quite as skilful as Sir Walter Scott's. Longfellow I should nevertheless put very much above Morris. Sometimes his verse is not so correct as that of Morris; but Morris is often tiresome, and Longfellow never is. I think the great merit of Longfellow as a story teller is that he always knows when to stop.

And thirdly, Longfellow perceived the beauty of the world in quite a special way, feeling the ghostliness of nature in all her manifestations, and reflecting it in his simple verse, without calling to his help any religious sentiment. Now this is not a common virtue. Most of the poets who are great nature lovers and take nature seriously have been very apt to mingle religious idealism with their pictures. Longfellow does not do this. There is no narrow religious feeling to be found in any of his work. Indeed, he was the most generous-minded of poets—looking everywhere for beauty and finding it everywhere, and always indifferent as to whether it was Christian or pagan, domestic or foreign, old or new. All he required was that it should be beautiful in itself, morally or otherwise.

And now I shall conclude this lecture with this simple observation, that I hope you will give fresh attention to

this poet in the future rather than allow yourselves to be influenced by some recent English criticisms upon him. If we listened to the critics only, we should very soon believe that there is nothing in the world which is good.

CHAPTER XI

THE HAVAMAL

OLD NORTHERN ETHICS OF LIFE

Then from his lips in music rolled
The Havamal of Odin old,
With sounds mysterious as the roar
Of billows on a distant shore.

PERHAPS many of you who read this little verse in Longfellow's "Saga of King Olaf" have wished to know what was this wonderful song that the ghost of the god sang to the king. I am afraid that you would be very disappointed in some respects by the "Havamal." There is indeed a magical song in it; and it is this magical song especially that Longfellow refers to, a song of charms. But most of the "Havamal" is a collection of ethical teaching. All that has been preserved by it has been published and translated by Professors Vigfusson and Powell. It is very old—perhaps the oldest northern literature that we have. I am going to attempt a short lecture upon it, because it is very closely related to the subject of northern character, and will help us, perhaps better than almost anything else, to understand how the ancestors of the English felt and thought before they became Christians. Nor is this all. I venture to say that the character of the modern English people still retains much more of the quality indicated by the "Havamal" than of the quality implied by Christianity. The old northern gods are not dead; they rule a very great part of the world to-day.

The proverbial philosophy of a people helps us to understand more about them than any other kind of literature. And this sort of literature is certainly among the oldest. It represents only the result of human experience in society,

the wisdom that men get by contact with each other, the results of familiarity with right and wrong. By studying the proverbs of a people, you can always make a very good guess as to whether you could live comfortably among them or not.

Froude, in one of his sketches of travel in Norway, made the excellent observation that if we could suddenly go back to the time of the terrible sea-kings, if we could revisit to-day the homes of the old northern pirates, and find them exactly as they were one thousand or fifteen hundred years ago, we should find them very much like the modern Englishmen—big, simple, silent men, concealing a great deal of shrewdness under an aspect of simplicity. The teachings of the "Havamal" give great force to this supposition. The book must have been known in some form to the early English—or at least the verses composing it (it is all written in verse); and as I have already said, the morals of the old English, as well as their character, differed very little from those of the men of the still further north, with whom they mingled and intermarried freely, both before and after the Danish conquest, when for one moment England and Sweden were one kingdom.

Of course you must remember that northern society was a very terrible thing in some ways. Every man carried his life in his hands; every farmer kept sword and spear at his side even in his own fields; and every man expected to die fighting. In fact, among the men of the more savage north—the men of Norway in especial—it was considered a great disgrace to die of sickness, to die on one's bed. That was not to die like a man. Men would go out and get themselves killed, when they felt old age or sickness coming on. But these facts must not blind us to the other fact that there was even in that society a great force of moral cohesion, and sound principles of morality. If there had not been, it could not have existed; much less could the people who lived under it have become the masters of a

great part of the world, which they are at the present day. There was, in spite of all that fierceness, much kindness and good nature among them; there were rules of conduct such as no man could find fault with—rules which still govern English society to some extent. And there was opportunity enough for social amusement, social enjoyment, and the winning of public esteem by a noble life.

Still, even in the "Havamal," one is occasionally startled by teachings which show the darker side of northern life, a life of perpetual vendetta. As in old Japan, no man could live under the same heaven with the murderer of his brother or father; vengeance was a duty even in the case of a friend. On the subject of enemies the "Havamal" gives not a little curious advice:

A man should never step a foot beyond his weapons; for he can never tell where, on his path without, he may need his spear.

A man before he goes into a house, should look to and espy all the doorways (*so that he can find his way out quickly again*), for he can never know where foes may be sitting in another man's house.

Does not this remind us of the Japanese proverb that everybody has three enemies outside of his own door? But the meaning of the "Havamal" teaching is much more sinister. And when the man goes into the house, he is still told to be extremely watchful—to keep his ears and eyes open so that he may not be taken by surprise:

The wary guest keeps watchful silence; he listens with his ears and peers about with his eyes; thus does every wise man look about him.

One would think that men must have had very strong nerves to take comfort under such circumstances, but the poet tells us that the man who can enjoy nothing must be both a coward and a fool. Although a man was to keep watch to protect his life, that was not a reason why he should be afraid of losing it. There were but three things of which a man should be particularly afraid. The first was drink

—because drink often caused a man to lose control of his temper; the second was another man's wife—repeatedly the reader is warned never to make love to another man's wife; and the third was thieves—men who would pretend friendship for the purpose of killing and stealing. The man who could keep constant watch over himself and his surroundings was, of course, likely to have the longest life.

Now in all countries there is a great deal of ethical teaching, and always has been, on the subject of speech. The "Havamal" is full of teaching on this subject—the necessity of silence, the danger and the folly of reckless talk. You all know the Japanese proverb that "the mouth is the front gate of all misfortune." The Norse poet puts the same truth into a grimmer shape: "The tongue works death to the head." Here are a number of sayings on this subject:

He that is never silent talks much folly; a glib tongue, unless it be bridled, will often talk a man into trouble.

Do not speak three angry words with a worse man; for often the better man falls by the worse man's sword.

Smile thou in the face of the man thou trustest not, and speak against thy mind.

This is of course a teaching of cunning; but it is the teaching, however immoral, that rules in English society today. In the old Norse, however, there were many reasons for avoiding a quarrel whenever possible—reasons which must have existed also in feudal Japan. A man might not care about losing his own life; but he had to be careful not to stir up a feud that might go on for a hundred years. Although there was a great deal of killing, killing always remained a serious matter, because for every killing there had to be a vengeance. It is true that the law exonerated the man who killed another, if he paid a certain blood-price; murder was not legally considered an unpardonable crime. But the family of the dead man would very seldom be satisfied with a payment; they would want blood

for blood. Accordingly men had to be very cautious about quarrelling, however brave they might personally be.

But all this caution about silence and about watchfulness did not mean that a man should be unable to speak to the purpose when speech was required. "A wise man," says the "Havamal," "should be able both to ask and to answer." There is a proverb which you know, to the effect that you can not shut the door upon another man's mouth. So says the Norse poet: "The sons of men can keep silence about nothing that passes among men; therefore a man should be able to take his own part, prudently and strongly." Says the "Havamal": "A fool thinks he knows everything if he sits snug in his little corner; but he is at a loss for words if the people put to him a question." Elsewhere it is said: "Arch dunce is he who can speak nought, for that is the mark of a fool." And the sum of all this teaching about the tongue is that men should never speak without good reason, and then should speak to the point strongly and wisely.

On the subject of fools there is a great deal in the "Havamal"; but you must understand always by the word fool, in the northern sense, a man of weak character who knows not what to do in time of difficulty. That was a fool among those men, and a dangerous fool; for in such a state of society mistakes in act or in speech might reach to terrible consequences. See these little observations about fools:

Open handed, bold-hearted men live most happily, they never feel care; but a fool troubles himself about everything. The niggard pines for gifts.

A fool is awake all night, worrying about everything; when the morning comes he is worn out, and all his troubles are just the same as before.

A fool thinks that all who smile upon him are his friends, not knowing, when he is with wise men, who there may be plotting against him.

If a fool gets a drink, all his mind is immediately displayed.

But it was not considered right for a man not to drink, although drink was a dangerous thing. On the contrary, not to drink would have been thought a mark of cowardice and of incapacity for self-control. A man was expected even to get drunk if necessary, and to keep his tongue and his temper no matter how much he drank. The strong character would only become more cautious and more silent under the influence of drink; the weak man would immediately show his weakness. I am told the curious fact that in the English army at the present day officers are expected to act very much after the teaching of the old Norse poet; a man is expected to be able on occasion to drink a considerable amount of wine or spirits without showing the effects of it, either in his conduct or in his speech. "Drink thy share of mead; speak fair or not at all"—that was the old text, and a very sensible one in its way.

Laughter was also condemned, if indulged in without very good cause. "The miserable man whose mind is warped laughs at everything, not knowing what he ought to know, that he himself has no lack of faults." I need scarcely tell you that the English are still a very serious people, not disposed to laugh nearly so much as are the men of the more sympathetic Latin races. You will remember perhaps Lord Chesterfield's saying that since he became a man no man had ever seen him laugh. I remember about twenty years ago that there was published by some Englishman a very learned and very interesting little book, called "The Philosophy of Laughter," in which it was gravely asserted that all laughter was foolish. I must acknowledge, however, that no book ever made me laugh more than the volume in question.

The great virtue of the men of the North, according to the "Havamal," was indeed the virtue which has given to the English race its present great position among nations,—the simplest of all virtues, common sense. But common sense means much more than the words might imply to the Japan-

ese students, or to any one unfamiliar with English idioms. Common sense, or mother-wit, means natural intelligence, as opposed to, and independent of, cultivated or educated intelligence. It means inherited knowledge; and inherited knowledge may take even the form of genius. It means foresight. It means intuitive knowledge of other people's character. It means cunning as well as broad comprehension. And the modern Englishman, in all times and in all countries, trusts especially to this faculty, which is very largely developed in the race to which he belongs. No Englishman believes in working from book learning. He suspects all theories, philosophical or other. He suspects everything new, and dislikes it, unless he can be compelled by the force of circumstances to see that this new thing has advantages over the old. Race-experience is what he invariably depends upon, whenever he can, whether in India, in Egypt, or in Australia. His statesmen do not consult historical precedents in order to decide what to do: they first learn the facts as they are; then they depend upon their own common sense, not at all upon their university learning or upon philosophical theories. And in the case of the English nation, it must be acknowledged that this instinctive method has been eminently successful. When the "Havamal" speaks of wisdom it means mother-wit, and nothing else; indeed, there was no reading or writing to speak of in those times:

No man can carry better baggage on his journey than wisdom.
There is no better friend than great common sense.

But the wise man should not show himself to be wise without occasion. He should remember that the majority of men are not wise, and he should be careful not to show his superiority over them unnecessarily. Neither should he despise men who do not happen to be as wise as himself:

No man is so good but there is a flaw in him, nor so bad as to be good for nothing.

Middling wise should every man be; never overwise. Those who know many things rarely lead the happiest life.

Middling wise should every man be; never overwise. No man should know his fate beforehand; so shall he live freest from care.

Middling wise should every man be, never too wise. A wise man's heart is seldom glad, if its owner be a true sage.

This is the ancient wisdom also of Solomon: "He that increases wisdom increases sorrow." But how very true as worldly wisdom these little northern sentences are. That a man who knows a little of many things, and no one thing perfectly, is the happiest man—this certainly is even more true to-day than it was a thousand years ago. Spencer has well observed that the man who can influence his generation, is never the man greatly in advance of his time, but only the man who is very slightly better than his fellows. The man who is very superior is likely to be ignored or disliked. Mediocrity can not help disliking superiority; and as the old northern sage declared, "the average of men is but moiety." Moiety does not mean necessarily mediocrity, but also that which is below mediocrity. What we call in England to-day, as Matthew Arnold called it, the Philistine element, continues to prove in our own time, to almost every superior man, the danger of being too wise.

Interesting in another way, and altogether more agreeable, are the old sayings about friendship: "Know this, if thou hast a trusty friend, go and see him often; because a road which is seldom trod gets choked with brambles and high grass."

Be not thou the first to break off from thy friend. Sorrow will eat thy heart if thou lackest the friend to open thy heart to.

Anything is better than to be false; he is no friend who only speaks to please.

Which means, of course, that a true friend is not afraid to find fault with his friend's course; indeed, that is his solemn duty. But these teachings about friendship are accompanied with many cautions; for one must be very

careful in the making of friends. The ancient Greeks had a terrible proverb: "Treat your friend as if he should become some day your enemy; and treat your enemy as if he might some day become your friend." This proverb seems to me to indicate a certain amount of doubt in human nature. We do not find this doubt in the Norse teaching, but on the contrary, some very excellent advice. The first thing to remember is that friendship is sacred: "He that opens his heart to another mixes blood with him." Therefore one should be very careful either about forming or about breaking a friendship.

A man should be a friend to his friend's friend. But no man should be a friend of his friend's foe, nor of his foe's friend.

A man should be a friend with his friend, and pay back gift with gift; give back laughter for laughter (to his enemies), and lesing for lies.

Give and give back makes the longest friend. Give not overmuch at one time. Gift always looks for return.

The poet also tells us how trifling gifts are quite sufficient to make friends and to keep them, if wisely given. A costly gift may seem like a bribe; a little gift is only the sign of kindly feeling. And as a mere matter of justice, a costly gift may be unkind, for it puts the friend under an obligation which he may not be rich enough to repay. Repeatedly we are told also that too much should not be expected of friendship. The value of a friend is his affection, his sympathy; but favours that cost must always be returned.

I never met a man so open hearted and free with his food, but that boon was boon to him—nor so generous as not to look for return if he had a chance.

Emerson says almost precisely the same thing in his essay on friendship—showing how little human wisdom has changed in all the centuries. Here is another good bit of advice concerning visits:

It is far away to an ill friend, even though he live on one's road; but to a good friend there is a short cut, even though he live far out.

Go on, be not a guest ever in the same house. The welcome becomes wearisome if he sits too long at another's table.

This means that we must not impose on our friends; but there is a further caution on the subject of eating at a friend's house. You must not go to your friend's house hungry, when you can help it.

A man should take his meal betimes, before he goes to his neighbour—or he will sit and seem hungered like one starving, and have no power to talk.

That is the main point to remember in dining at another's house, that you are not there only for your own pleasure, but for that of other people. You are expected to talk; and you can not talk if you are very hungry. At this very day a gentleman makes it the rule to do the same thing. Accordingly we see that these rough men of the North must have had a good deal of social refinement—refinement not of dress or of speech, but of feeling. Still, says the poet, one's own home is the best, though it be but a cottage. "A man is a man in his own house."

Now we come to some sentences teaching caution, which are noteworthy in a certain way:

Tell one man thy secret, but not two. What three men know, all the world knows.

Never let a bad man know thy mishaps; for from a bad man thou shalt never get reward for thy sincerity.

I shall presently give you some modern examples in regard to the advice concerning bad men. Another thing to be cautious about is praise. If you have to be careful about blame, you must be very cautious also about praise.

Praise the day at even-tide; a woman at her burying; a sword when it has been tried; a maid when she is married; ice when you have crossed over it; ale, when it is drunk.

If there is anything noteworthy in English character today it is the exemplification of this very kind of teaching. This is essentially northern. The last people from whom praise can be expected, even for what is worthy of all praise, are the English. A new friendship, a new ideal, a reform, a noble action, a wonderful poet, an exquisite painting—any of these things will be admired and praised by every other people in Europe long before you can get Englishmen to praise. The Englishman all this time is studying, considering, trying to find fault. Why should he try to find fault? So that he will not make any mistakes at a later day. He has inherited the terrible caution of his ancestors in regard to mistakes. It must be granted that his caution has saved him from a number of very serious mistakes that other nations have made. It must also be acknowledged that he exercises a fair amount of moderation in the opposite direction—this modern Englishman; he has learned caution of another kind, which his ancestors taught him. "Power," says the "Havamal," "should be used with moderation; for whoever finds himself among valiant men will discover that no man is peerless." And this is a very important thing for the strong man to know—that however strong, he can not be the strongest; his match will be found when occasion demands it. Not only Scandinavian but English rulers have often discovered this fact to their cost. Another matter to be very anxious about is public opinion.

Chattels die; kinsmen pass away; one dies oneself; but I know something that never dies—the name of the man, for good or bad.

Do not think that this means anything religious. It means only that the reputation of a man goes to influence the good or ill fortune of his descendants. It is something to be proud of, to be the son of a good man; it helps to success in life. On the other hand, to have had a father of ill reputation is a very serious obstacle to success of any kind

in countries where the influence of heredity is strongly recognised.

I have nearly exhausted the examples of this northern wisdom which I selected for you; but there are two subjects which remain to be considered. One is the law of conduct in regard to misfortune; and the other is the rule of conduct in regard to women. A man was expected to keep up a brave heart under any circumstances. These old Northmen seldom committed suicide; and I must tell you that all the talk about Christianity having checked the practice of suicide to some extent, can not be fairly accepted as truth. In modern England to-day the suicides average nearly three thousand a year; but making allowance for extraordinary circumstances, it is certainly true that the northern races consider suicide in an entirely different way from what the Latin races do. There was very little suicide among the men of the North, because every man considered it his duty to get killed, not to kill himself; and to kill himself would have seemed cowardly, as implying fear of being killed by others. In modern ethical training, quite apart from religious considerations, a man is taught that suicide is only excusable in case of shame, or under such exceptional circumstances as have occurred in the history of the Indian mutiny. At all events, we have the feeling still strongly manifested in England that suicide is not quite manly; and this is certainly due much more to ancestral habits of thinking, which date back to pagan days, than to Christian doctrine. As I have said, the pagan English would not commit suicide to escape mere pain. But the northern people knew how to die to escape shame. There is an awful story in Roman history about the wives and daughters of the conquered German tribes, thousands in number, asking to be promised that their virtue should be respected, and all killing themselves when the Roman general refused the request. No southern people of Eu-

rope in that time would have shown such heroism upon such a matter. Leaving honour aside, however, the old book tells us that a man should never despair.

Fire, the sight of the sun, good health, and a blameless life,—these are the goodliest things in this world.

Yet a man is not utterly wretched, though he have bad health, or be maimed.

The halt may ride a horse; the handless may drive a herd; the deaf can fight and do well; better be blind than buried. A corpse is good for naught.

On the subject of women there is not very much in the book beyond the usual caution in regard to wicked women; but there is this little observation:

Never blame a woman for what is all man's weakness. Hues charming and fair may move the wise and not the dullard. Mighty love turns the son of men from wise to fool.

This is shrewd, and it contains a very remarkable bit of esthetic truth, that it requires a wise man to see certain kinds of beauty, which a stupid man could never be made to understand. And, leaving aside the subject of love, what very good advice it is never to laugh at a person for what can be considered a common failure. In the same way an intelligent man should learn to be patient with the unintelligent, as the same poem elsewhere insists.

Now what is the general result of this little study, the general impression that it leaves upon the mind? Certainly we feel that the life reflected in these sentences was a life in which caution was above all things necessary—caution in thought and speech and act, never ceasing, by night or day, during the whole of a man's life. Caution implies moderation. Moderation inevitably develops a certain habit of justice—a justice that might not extend outside of the race, but a justice that would be exercised between man and man of the same blood. Very much of English character and of English history is explained by the life that the "Havamal" portrays. Very much that is

good; also very much that is bad—not bad in one sense, so far as the future of the race is concerned, but in a social way certainly not good. The judgment of the Englishman by all other European peoples is that he is the most suspicious, the most reserved, the most unreceptive, the most unfriendly, the coldest hearted, and the most domineering of all western peoples. Ask a Frenchman, an Italian, a German, a Spaniard, even an American, what he thinks about Englishmen; and every one of them will tell you the very same thing. This is precisely what the character of men would become who had lived for thousands of years in the conditions of northern society. But you would find upon the other hand that nearly all nations would speak highly of certain other English qualities—energy, courage, honour, justice (between themselves). They would say that although no man is so difficult to make friends with, the friendship of an Englishman once gained is more strong and true than any other. And as the battle of life still continues, and must continue for thousands of years to come, it must be acknowledged that the English character is especially well fitted for the struggle. Its reserves, its cautions, its doubts, its suspicions, its brutality —these have been for it in the past, and are still in the present, the best social armour and panoply of war. It is not a lovable nor an amiable character; it is not even kindly. The Englishman of the best type is much more inclined to be just than he is to be kind, for kindness is an emotional impulse, and the Englishman is on his guard against every kind of emotional impulse. But with all this, the character is a grand one, and its success has been the best proof of its value.

Now you will have observed in the reading of this ancient code of social morals that, while none of the teaching is religious, some of it is absolutely immoral from any religious standpoint. No great religion permits us to speak what is not true, and to smile in the face of an enemy

while pretending to be his friend. No religion teaches that we should "pay back lesing for lies." Neither does a religion tell us that we should expect a return for every kindness done; that we should regard friendship as being actuated by selfish motives; that we should never praise when praise seems to be deserved. In fact, when Sir Walter Scott long ago made a partial translation of the "Havamal," he thought himself obliged to leave out a number of sentences which seemed to him highly immoral, and to apologise for others. He thought that they would shock English readers too much.

We are not quite so squeamish to-day; and a thinker of our own time would scarcely deny that English society is very largely governed at this moment by the same kind of rules that Sir Walter Scott thought to be so bad. But here we need not condemn English society in particular. All European society has been for hundreds of years conducting itself upon very much the same principles; for the reason that human social experience has been the same in all western countries. I should say that the only difference between English society and other societies is that the hardness of character is very much greater. Let us go back even to the most Christian times of western societies in the most Christian country of Europe, and observe whether the social code was then and there so very different from the social code of the old "Havamal." Mr. Spencer observes in his "Ethics" that, so far as the conduct of life is concerned, religion is almost nothing and practice is everything. We find this wonderfully exemplified in a most remarkable book of social precepts written in the seventeenth century, in Spain, under the title of the "Oraculo Manual." It was composed by a Spanish priest, named Baltasar Gracian, who was born in the year 1601 and died in 1658; and it has been translated into nearly all languages. The best English translation, published by Macmillan, is called "The Art of Worldly Wisdom." It is

even more admired to-day than in the seventeenth century; and what it teaches as to social conduct holds as good to-day of modern society as it did of society two hundred years ago. It is one of the most unpleasant and yet interesting books ever published—unpleasant because of the malicious cunning which it often displays—interesting because of the frightful perspicacity of the author. The man who wrote that book understood the hearts of men, especially the bad side. He was a gentleman of high rank before he became a priest, and his instinctive shrewdness must have been hereditary. Religion, this man would have said, teaches the best possible morals; but the world is not governed by religion altogether, and to mix with it, we must act according to its dictates.

These dictates remind us in many ways of the cautions and the cunning of the "Havamal." The first thing enjoined upon a man both by the Norse writer and by the Spanish author is the art of silence. Probably this has been the result of social experience in all countries. "Cautious silence is the holy of holies of worldly wisdom," says Gracian. And he gives many elaborate reasons for this statement, not the least of which is the following: "If you do not declare yourself immediately, you arouse expectation, especially when the importance of your position makes you the object of general attention. Mix a little mystery with everything, and the very mystery arouses veneration." A little further on he gives us exactly the same advice as did the "Havamal" writer, in regard to being frank with enemies. "Do not," he says, "show your wounded finger, for everything will knock up against it; nor complain about it, for malice always aims where weakness can be injured. . . . Never disclose the source of mortification or of joy, if you wish the one to cease, the other to endure." About secrets the Spaniard is quite as cautious as the Norseman. He says, "Especially dangerous are secrets entrusted to friends. He that communicates his

secret to another makes himself that other man's slave." But after a great many such cautions in regard to silence and secrecy, he tells us also that we must learn how to fight with the world. You remember the advice of the "Havamal" on this subject, how it condemns as a fool the man who can not answer a reproach. The Spaniard is, however, much more malicious in his suggestions. He tells us that we must "learn to know every man's thumbscrew." I suppose you know that a thumbscrew was an instrument of torture used in old times to force confessions from criminals. This advice means nothing less than that we should learn how to be able to hurt other men's feelings, or to flatter other men's weaknesses. "First guess every man's ruling passion, appeal to it by a word, set it in motion by temptation, and you will infallably give checkmate to his freedom of will." The term "give checkmate" is taken from the game of chess, and must here be understood as meaning to overcome, to conquer. A kindred piece of advice is "keep a store of sarcasms, and know how to use them." Indeed he tells us that this is the point of greatest tact in human intercourse. "Struck by the slightest word of this kind, many fall away from the closest intimacy with superiors or inferiors, which intimacy could not be in the slightest shaken by a whole conspiracy of popular insinuation or private malevolence." In other words, you can more quickly destroy a man's friendship by one word of sarcasm than by any amount of intrigue. Does not this read very much like sheer wickedness? Certainly it does; but the author would have told you that you must fight the wicked with their own weapons. In the "Havamal" you will not find anything quite so openly wicked as that; but we must suppose that the Norsemen knew the secret, though they might not have put it into words. As for the social teaching, you will find it very subtly expressed even in the modern English novels of George Meredith, who, by the way, has written a poem in praise of sarcasm and ridi-

cule. But let us now see what the Spanish author has to tell us about friendship and unselfishness.

The shrewd man knows that others when they seek him do not seek "him," but "their advantage in him and by him." That is to say, a shrewd man does not believe in disinterested friendship. This is much worse than anything in the "Havamal." And it is diabolically elaborated. What are we to say about such teaching as the following: "A wise man would rather see men needing him than thanking him. To keep them on the threshold of hope is diplomatic; to trust to their gratitude is boorish; hope has a good memory, gratitude a bad one"? There is much more of this kind; but after the assurance that only a boorish person (that is to say, an ignorant and vulgar man) can believe in gratitude, the author's opinion of human nature needs no further elucidation. The old Norseman would have been shocked at such a statement. But he might have approved the following: "When you hear anything favourable, keep a tight rein upon your credulity; if unfavourable, give it the spur." That is to say, when you hear anything good about another man, do not be ready to believe it; but if you hear anything bad about him, believe as much of it as you can.

I notice also many other points of resemblance between the northern and the Spanish teaching in regard to caution. The "Havamal" says that you must not pick a quarrel with a worse man that yourself; "because the better man often falls by the worse man's sword." The Spanish priest gives a still shrewder reason for the same policy. "Never contend," he says, "with a man who has nothing to lose; for thereby you enter into an unequal conflict. The other enters without anxiety; having lost everything, including shame, he has no further loss to fear." I think that this is an immoral teaching, though a very prudent one; but I need scarcely tell you that it is still a principle in modern society not to contend with a man who has no reputation to

lose. I think it is immoral, because it is purely selfish, and because a good man ought not to be afraid to denounce a wrong because of making enemies. Another point, however, on which the "Havamal" and the priest agree, is more commendable and interesting. "We do not think much of a man who never contradicts us; that is no sign he loves us, but rather a sign that he loves himself. Original and out-of-the-way views are signs of superior ability."

I should not like you to suppose, however, that the whole of the book from which I have been quoting is of the same character as the quotations. There is excellent advice in it; and much kindly teaching on the subject of generous acts. It is a book both good and bad, and never stupid. The same man who tells you that friendship is seldom unselfish, also declares that life would be a desert without friends, and that there is no magic like a good turn—that is, a kind act. He teaches the importance of getting good will by honest means, although he advises us also to learn how to injure. I am sure that nobody could read the book without benefit. And I may close these quotations from it with the following paragraph, which is the very best bit of counsel that could be given to a literary student:

> Be slow and sure. Quickly done can be quickly undone. To last an eternity requires an eternity of preparation. Only excellence counts. Profound intelligence is the only foundation for immortality. Worth much costs much. The precious metals are the heaviest.

But so far as the question of human conduct is concerned, the book of Gracian is no more of a religious book than is the "Havamal" of the heathen North. You would find, were such a book published to-day and brought up to the present time by any shrewd writer, that western morality has not improved in the least since the time before Christianity was established, so far as the rules of society go. Society is not, and can not be, religious, because it is a state of continual warfare. Every person in it has to fight,

and the battle is not less cruel now because it is not fought with swords. Indeed, I should think that the time when every man carried his sword in society was a time when men were quite as kindly and much more honest than they are now. The object of this little lecture was to show you that the principles of the ancient Norse are really the principles ruling English society to-day; but I think you will be able to take from it a still larger meaning. It is that not only one form of society, but all forms of society, represent the warfare of man and man. That is why thinkers, poets, philosophers, in all ages, have tried to find solitude, to keep out of the contest, to devote themselves only to study of the beautiful and the true. But the prizes of life are not to be obtained in solitude, although the prizes of thought can only there be won. After all, whatever we may think about the cruelty and treachery of the social world, it does great things in the end. It quickens judgment, deepens intelligence, enforces the acquisition of self-control, creates forms of mental and moral strength that can not fail to be sometimes of vast importance to mankind. But if you should ask me whether it increases human happiness, I should certainly say "no." The "Havamal" said the same thing,—the truly wise man can not be happy.

CHAPTER XII

BEYOND MAN

It seems to me a lecturer's duty to speak to you about any remarkable thought at this moment engaging the attention of western philosophers and men of science,—partly because any such new ideas are certain, sooner or later, to be reflected in literature, and partly because without a knowledge of them you might form incorrect ideas in relation to utterances of any important philosophic character. I am not going to discourse about Nietzsche, though the title of this lecture is taken from one of his books; the ideas about which I am going to tell you, you will not find in his books. It is most extraordinary, to my thinking, that these ideas never occurred to him, for he was an eminent man of science before writing his probably insane books. I have not the slightest sympathy with most of his ideas; they seem to me misinterpretations of evolutional teachings; and if not misinterpretations, they are simply undeveloped and ill-balanced thinking. But the title of one of his books, and the idea which he tries always unsuccessfully to explain,—that of a state above mankind, a moral condition "beyond man," as he calls it,—that is worth talking about. It is not nonsense at all, but fact, and I think that I can give you a correct idea of the realities in the case. Leaving Nietzsche entirely alone, then, let us ask if it is possible to suppose a condition of human existence above morality,—that is to say, more moral than the most moral ideal which a human brain can conceive? We may answer, it is quite possible, and it is not only possible, but it has actually been predicted by many great thinkers, including Herbert Spencer.

We have been brought up to think that there can be

nothing better than virtue, than duty, than strictly following the precepts of a good religion. However, our ideas of goodness and of virtue necessarily imply the existence of the opposite qualities. To do a good thing because it is our duty to do it, implies a certain amount of resolve, a struggle against difficulty. The virtue of honesty is a term implying the difficulty of being perfectly honest. When we think of any virtuous or great deed, we can not help thinking of the pain and obstacles that have to be met with in performing that deed. All our active morality is a struggle against immorality. And I think that, as every religion teaches, it must be granted that no human being has a perfectly moral nature.

Could a world exist in which the nature of all the inhabitants would be so moral that the mere idea of what is immoral could not exist? Let me explain my question more in detail. Imagine a society in which the idea of dishonesty would not exist, because no person could be dishonest, a society in which the idea of unchastity could not exist, because no person could possibly be unchaste, a world in which no one could have any idea of envy, ambition or anger, because such passions could not exist, a world in which there would be no idea of duty, filial or parental, because not to be filial, not to be loving, not to do everything which we human beings now call duty, would be impossible. In such a world ideas of duty would be quite useless; for every action of existence would represent the constant and faultless performance of what we term duty. Moreover, there would be no difficulty, no pain in such performance; it would be the constant and unfailing pleasure of life. With us, unfortunately, what is wrong often gives pleasure; and what is good to do, commonly causes pain. But in the world which I am asking you to imagine there could not be any wrong, nor any pleasure in wrong-doing; all the pleasure would be in right-doing. To give a very simple illustration—one of the commonest and most pardon-

able faults of young people is eating, or drinking, or sleeping too much. But in our imaginary world to eat or to drink or to sleep in even the least degree more than is necessary could not be done; the constitution of the race would not permit it. One more illustration. Our children have to be educated carefully in regard to what is right or wrong; in the world of which I am speaking, no time would be wasted in any such education, for every child would be born with full knowledge of what is right and wrong. Or to state the case in psychological language—I mean the language of scientific, not of metaphysical, psychology—we should have a world in which morality would have been transmitted into inherited instinct. Now again let me put the question: can we imagine such a world? Perhaps you will answer, Yes, in heaven—nowhere else. But I answer you that such a world actually exists, and that it can be studied in almost any part of the East or of Europe by a person of scientific training. The world of insects actually furnishes examples of such a moral transformation. It is for this reason that such writers as Sir John Lubbock and Herbert Spencer have not hesitated to say that certain kinds of social insects have immensely surpassed men, both in social and in ethical progress.

But that is not all that it is necessary to say here. You might think that I am only repeating a kind of parable. The important thing is the opinion of scientific men that humanity will at last, in the course of millions of years, reach the ethical conditions of the ants. It is only five or six years ago that some of these conditions were established by scientific evidence, and I want to speak of them. They have a direct bearing upon important ethical questions; and they have startled the whole moral world, and set men thinking in entirely new directions.

In order to explain how the study of social insects has set moralists of recent years thinking in a new direction, it will be necessary to generalise a great deal in the course

of so short a lecture. It is especially the social conditions of the ants which has inspired these new ideas; but you must not think that any one species of ants furnishes us with all the facts. The facts have been arrived at only through the study of hundreds of different kinds of ants by hundreds of scientific men; and it is only by the consensus of their evidence that we get the ethical picture which I shall try to outline for you. Altogether there are probably about five thousand different species of ants, and these different species represent many different stages of social evolution, from the most primitive and savage up to the most highly civilised and moral. The details of the following picture are furnished by a number of the highest species only; that must not be forgotten. Also, I must remind you that the morality of the ant, by the necessity of circumstance, does not extend beyond the limits of its own species. Impeccably ethical within the community, ants carry on war outside their own borders; were it not for this, we might call them morally perfect creatures.

Although the mind of an ant can not be at all like the mind of the human being, it is so intelligent that we are justified in trying to describe its existence by a kind of allegorical comparison with human life. Imagine, then, a world full of women, working night and day,—building, tunnelling, bridging,—also engaged in agriculture, in horticulture, and in taking care of many kinds of domestic animals. (I may remark that ants have domesticated no fewer than five hundred and eighty-four different kinds of creatures.) This world of women is scrupulously clean; busy as they are, all of them carry combs and brushes about them, and arrange themselves several times a day. In addition to this constant work, these women have to take care of myriads of children,—children so delicate that the slightest change in the weather may kill them. So the children have to be carried constantly from one place to another in order to keep them warm.

Though this multitude of workers are always gathering food, no one of them would eat or drink a single atom more than is necessary; and none of them would sleep for one second longer than is necessary. Now comes a surprising fact, about which a great deal must be said later on. These women have no sex. They are women, for they sometimes actually give birth, as virgins, to children; but they are incapable of wedlock. They are more than vestals. Sex is practically suppressed.

This world of workers is protected by an army of soldiers. The soldiers are very large, very strong, and shaped so differently from the working females that they do not seem at first to belong to the same race. They help in the work, though they are not able to help in some delicate kinds of work—they are too clumsy and strong. Now comes the second astonishing fact: these soldiers are all women—amazons, we might call them; but they are sexless women. In these also sex has been suppressed.

You ask, where do the children come from? Most of the children are born of special mothers—females chosen for the purpose of bearing offspring, and not allowed to do anything else. They are treated almost like empresses, being constantly fed and attended and served, and being lodged in the best way possible. Only these can eat and drink at all times—they must do so for the sake of their offspring. They are not suffered to go out, unless strongly attended, and they are not allowed to run any risk of danger or of injury. The life of the whole race circles about them and about their children, but they are very few.

Last of all are the males, the men. One naturally asks why females should have been specialised into soldiers instead of men. It appears that the females have more reserve force, and all the force that might have been utilised in the giving of life has been diverted to the making of aggressive powers. The real males are very small and weak. They appear to be treated with indifference and

contempt. They are suffered to become the bridegrooms of one night, after which they die very quickly. By contrast, the lives of the rest are very long. Ants live for at least three or four years, but the males live only long enough to perform their solitary function.

In the foregoing little fantasy, the one thing that should have most impressed you is the fact of the suppression of sex. But now comes the last and most astonishing fact of all: this suppression of sex is not natural, but artificial—I mean that it is voluntary. It has been discovered that ants are able, by a systematic method of nourishment, to suppress or develop sex as they please. The race has decided that sex shall not be allowed to exist except in just so far as it is absolutely necessary to the existence of the race. Individuals with sex are tolerated only as necessary evils. Here is an instance of the most powerful of all passions voluntarily suppressed for the benefit of the community at large. It vanishes whenever unnecessary; when necessary after a war or a calamity of some kind, it is called into existence again. Certainly it is not wonderful that such a fact should have set moralists thinking. Of course if a human community could discover some secret way of effecting the same object, and could have the courage to do it, or rather the unselfishness to do it, the result would simply be that sexual immorality of any kind would become practically impossible. The very idea of such immorality would cease to exist.

But that is only one fact of self-suppression, and the ant-world furnishes hundreds. To state the whole thing in the simplest possible way, let me say the race has entirely got rid of everything that we call a selfish impulse. Even hunger and thirst allow of no selfish gratification. The entire life of the community is devoted to the common good and to mutual help and to the care of the young. Spencer says it is impossible to imagine that an ant has a sense of duty like our own,—a religion, if you like. But it does not

need a sense of duty, it does not need religion. Its life is religion in the practical sense. Probably millions of years ago the ant had feelings much more like our own than it has now. At that time, to perform altruistic actions may have been painful to the ant; to perform them now has become the one pleasure of its existence. In order to bring up children and serve the state more efficiently these insects have sacrificed their sex and every appetite that we call by the name of animal passion. Moreover they have a perfect community, a society in which nobody could think of property, except as a state affair, a public thing, or as the Romans would say, a *res publica.* In a human community so organised, there could not be ambition, any jealousy, any selfish conduct of any sort—indeed, no selfishness at all. The individual is said to be practically sacrificed for the sake of the race; but such a supposition means the highest moral altruism. Therefore thinkers have to ask, "Will man ever rise to something like the condition of ants?"

Herbert Spencer says that such is the evident tendency. He does not say, nor is it at all probable, that there will be in future humanity such physiological specialisation as would correspond to the suppression of sex among ants, or to the bringing of women to the dominant place in the human world, and the masculine sex to an inferior position. That is not likely ever to happen, for reasons which it would take very much too long to speak of now. But there is evidence that the most selfish of all human passions will eventually be brought under control—under such control that the present cause of wellnigh all human suffering, the pressure of population, will be practically removed. And there is psychological evidence that the human mind will undergo such changes that wrong-doing, in the sense of unkindly action, will become almost impossible, and that the highest pleasure will be found not in selfishness but in unselfishness. Of course there are thousands of things to think about, suggested by this discovery of the life of ants. I am only

telling the more important ones. What I have told you ought at least to suggest that the idea of a moral condition much higher than all our moral conditions of to-day is quite possible,—that it is not an idea to be laughed at. But it was not Nietzsche who ever conceived this possibility. His "Beyond Man," and the real and much to be hoped for "beyond man," are absolutely antagonistic conceptions. When the ancient Hebrew writer said, thousands of years ago, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways," he could not have imagined how good his advice would prove in the light of twentieth century science.

CHAPTER XIII

ON TREE SPIRITS IN WESTERN POETRY

REALLY one of the very best ways in which to utilise the resources of European poetry you will find to be the establishment of the romantic or emotional relations of that poetry to Japanese literature and legend. Last year one of the literary class wrote for me a very pretty version of the wonderful old story of the *Sanjiusan-gendo*, and I thought, while reading it, that it was rather strange that no effort had been made to call the attention of literary students to the beautiful stories of the same class existing in western literature. To-day I am going to attempt to show you how the same idea as that of the Japanese legend produced some beautiful literature in the West.

The best stories of this class—indeed, the best of any class belonging to what has so well been called zoological mythology,—are Greek. Many of the Greek stories you have heard something about. You know that the cypress tree was once a beautiful boy called Kuparissos (if we spell the name the true Greek way—otherwise Cyparissus) and that he killed, by mistake, a pet deer, and therefore would have died of grief, had not the god changed him into the tree that still bears his name. You have heard no doubt that the anemone, or "wind-flower," is the flower of young Adonis—that he was changed into it after having been mortally wounded by a wild boar. It was at that time that the rose, originally white, became red; for the goddess Aphrodite, hurrying to help Adonis, tore her beautiful feet with the thorns of the plant, whose flowers remained red with her blood. Doubtless you know that the flower Narcissus bears the name of the handsome youth who refused the love of the

nymph Echo, but thereafter, beholding his own face and figure reflected in water, fell in love with the shadow of himself, and pined away, and was turned into a flower. And there is the hyacinth, the flower of the youth Hyacinthos, accidentally killed by the god of the sun, while the two were playing at quoits; the god changed him into the plant, and the flowers of the plant bear the Greek letters "ai! ai!"—a cry of lamentation. I need not speak of the story of the laurel tree and of many others. Enough to say that in Greek mythology almost every plant, tree, bird, insect, had some such legend attached to it. These are commonly known facts. It is less generally understood that the Greeks considered everything infused with spirit,—that rocks and trees, clouds and waters, had their particular souls or animating principles. Every river, every spring, every tree had its particular god, or demi-god. To touch the subject at all satisfactorily would require a great deal of time, and I can only suggest to you in a brief way that the thoughts of the Greeks about the ubiquity of divine or half-divine persons were much like those of the Far East in respect to the ancient gods, with some differences of a particularly humane and often beautiful kind. To-day I shall speak only of the beliefs about trees; this properly introduces the topic of the lecture.

Tree-spirits were considered by the Greeks as of two kinds. The spirits of fruit-trees were called Meliades; the spirits of all other trees were called Dryads or Hamadryads. They were principally female, and sometimes appeared in the shapes of beautiful women. They had great supernatural power, but their lives depended altogether upon the life of the tree, and when the tree died the spirits also died. Accordingly they were very anxious about their trees, and they could reward or punish men according to whether their trees were respected or injured. To cut down certain trees was therefore considered very dangerous. In Japanese legends, the *enoki* is often mentioned as a tree

which it is dangerous to cut down. A number of Greek trees were not only thus dreaded, but were regularly propitiated with sacrifice.

Of course the literary value of this tree mythology depends, like that of kindred Japanese myth, upon human interest,—upon the poetry or sentiment attaching to the old stories. Some are very beautiful and very sad; they not only touch our emotions, they also teach us a moral, or remind us, in a way never to be forgotten, of certain weaknesses in human will. One such story, perhaps the most beautiful of all, is the story of Rhœcus (the English poet Landor, spells the name Rhaicos, but the other spelling is more correct; the true Greek word would be Rhoikos). This was a man who loved a tree spirit. It had been his intention to cut down her tree; but she came out of her tree, and pleaded with Rhœcus so eloquently and so tenderly that he promised to spare the tree on condition that she would love him, because he saw that she was more beautiful than any mortal woman. Then she told him that it was dangerous to love the spirit of a tree. "I am," she said, "very jealous; and if you should ever show affection to any other person, or if you should refuse to come to me when I send for you, then all will end between us, and you will become very unhappy. It is not a trifling matter to love a daughter of the gods." Of course the young man said what a lover might be expected to say under such circumstances. But the nymph said, "There is yet another matter to remember: the life of man is not long, but the life of a tree is very long—I shall still be young and beautiful when you are old and dead. Are you not as rash as Tithonus was?" Rhœcus still made sincere promises and protestations; and at last the tree spirit agreed to his wishes. "But," she said, "I can not live with you in your father's house, I must not go so far away from my tree, and you can only come to me when there is nobody else in the woods. Whenever I wish you to come I will send you a bee. When you see the bee flying

round your head, then come you must. If you can not come, I shall know that something terrible has happened." Everything was happy after that for a long time. But one day Rhœcus, together with a number of young friends, began to play a game of draughts; and while he was playing the bee came. Then he forgot all about the tree spirit and struck the bee with his hand impatiently. The bee came back again, and he hit it again. All of a sudden he remembered—jumped up from the draught board and ran to the forest. But he was too late. The bee had been there before him; the tree of the nymph was withered and dead—she was gone forever. Then Rhœcus could not be comforted. He sat down before the dead tree, and presently he himself died of grief. That is the whole story in substance.

You will see that from a literary point of view, such a story may be treated in a variety of ways. The American poet Lowell treated it from a moral point of view; and I believe that it had been treated from a merely romantic point of view by several French poets. But Landor has certainly succeeded best with it; he retells it after the fashion of the idyllic poet, in a dialogue, and his scholarly knowledge of Greek literature and life shows to advantage in this version. I may remark that the Greek text of the original story is lost—probably forever. It was the work of a writer called Charon, of Lampsacus—a name easy to remember, being the same as that of the ghostly ferryman who rowed the souls of the dead over the shadowy river Styx.

Now we shall read some extracts from Landor's beautiful rendering of the legend, to which he gives the title of "The Hamadryad." We need not read the introduction, as the composition is rather long. It begins with an account of how the father of Rhœcus orders his son to go and help a household servant cut down an oak tree in the wood. He goes to the tree and finds the servant axe in hand before it,

and he notices that the servant hesitates to strike. "What is the matter?" asks the lad.

"There are bees about,
Or wasps, or hornets," said the cautious eld,
"Look sharp, O son of Thallinos!" The youth
Inclined his ear, afar, and warily,
And cavern'd in his hand. He heard a buzz
At first, and then the sound grew soft and clear,
And then divided into what seemed tune,
And there were words upon it, plaintive words.
He turned, and said, "Echeion! do not strike
That tree; it must be hollow; for some god
Speaks from within. Come thyself near." Again
Both turned toward it; and behold! there sat
Upon the moss below, with her two palms
Pressing it on each side, a maid in form.
Downcast were her long eyelashes, and pale
Her cheek, but never mountain-ash displayed
Berries of colour like her lips so pure,
Nor were the anemones about her hair
Soft, smooth, and wavering, like the face beneath.

The ghostly character of the tree is first revealed by a humming noise, which both men imagined to be made by bees. But listening carefully, they are startled to find that this is not the sound of humming, but the sound of a thin sweet voice that is uttering words, very sad words of fear and grief. And before this surprise is over, suddenly they see, sitting under the tree, a beautiful shape like a young girl, very pale, but with strangely red lips. Looking at her face, its lines appeared as uncertain and wavering as shapes of ripples on the surface of water; but there were living flowers in her hair, real, not ghostly flowers; for they were quite distinctly seen. There is something in the appearance that frightens both men, in spite of the beauty and the softness; the supernatural character is revealed by the fact that all the outlines of the shadow seem to be flowering —ready to vanish like smoke in another moment. But presently the sweet strange thin voice speaks, calling Rhœcus by

name and bidding him send away the servant. The servant is only too glad to be sent away, for he is frightened almost to death; and then the tree spirit—for such she proves to be—begins to talk to the young man and to plead with him.

H.—And wouldst thou too shed the most innocent
Of blood? No vow demands it; no god wills
The oak to bleed.
R.— Who art thou? Whence? Why here?
And whither wouldst thou go? Among the robed
In white or saffron, or the hue that most
Resembles dawn or the clear sky, is none
Arrayed as thou art. What so beautiful
As that grey robe which clings about thee close,
Like moss to stones adhering, leaves to trees,
Yet lets thy bosom rise and fall in turn,
As, touched by zephyrs, fall and rise the boughs
Of graceful platane by the river side.
H.—Lovest thou well thy father's house?
R.— Indeed
I love it, well I love it, yet would leave
For thine, where'er it be, my father's house,
With all the marks upon the door, that show
My growth at every birthday since the third,
And all the charms, o'erpowering evil eyes,
My mother nailed for me against my bed,
And the Cydonian bow (which thou shalt see)
Won in my race last spring from Eutychos.

The description here of the nymph is Landor's own—perhaps Lowell follows the Greek idea more closely in representing the nymph as naked; but the artistic device of the appearance of leaves and moss is finer, and a little more ghostly. As yet the young man has no idea that he is talking to a tree spirit; he only sees before him a charming maiden, so charming that he is willing not only to spare the tree at her request, but to give up everything for her,—even to leave his father's house and the things which youth delights in. Of course he does not yet understand what the question means as to whether he would not regret to

leave his father's house. The tree spirit wanted him to say that he could not or would not leave his father's house, so that she might reply to him, by way of argument, "Then think how much you would make me suffer by destroying my house—my tree!" But he is already so much in love with her that he answers in the very opposite way. There is a pretty naïveté, a boyish innocence, in his replies which paints character very prettily; this is also one of Landor's inventions. The reference to the door with marks upon it showing how tall the boy was at each year from his childhood, is perhaps more English than Greek in thought; yet it is certainly a very human touch. It is a custom in England every year to measure the growth of a boy by making him stand with his back to a wall or door, and putting a little mark on the wall or door to show how high his head reached on such or such a date.

The conversation proceeds; the young man is still ignorant of who this beautiful person may be, and even when she asks him if he has never heard of the tree spirit, he does not think that he is talking to one. He can only tell her that he loves her; he arranges the moss smoothly under her tree, picking up and throwing away the little pebbles and fixing a corner to make a comfortable seat; and when she sits down again before him, he begs her to come with him to his father's house as his bride. But she answers:

H.—Nay; and of mine I can not give thee part.
R.—Where is it?
H.— In this oak.
R.— Ay; now begins
The tale of Hamadryad: tell it through.
H.—Pray of thy father never to cut down
My tree; and promise him, as well thou mayst,
That every year he shall receive from me
More honey than will buy him nine fat sheep,
More wax than he will burn to all the gods.
Why fallest thou upon thy face? Some thorn

May scratch it, rash young man! Rise up; for shame!
R.—For shame I can not rise. O pity me!
I dare not sue for love—but do not hate!
Let me once more behold thee—not once more,
But many days; let me love on—unloved!
I aimed too high; on my own head the bolt
Falls back, and pierces to the very brain.

But she comforts him—bids him not to be afraid—even promises to love him, only she can not go to his house. Returning full of joy, the young man intercedes with his father for the tree—promising that he will every year obtain from that tree a certain quantity of wax and honey. The father is quite pleased and agrees not to destroy the tree. And every day Rhœcus goes to see the dryad in the woods. Sometimes he does not find her; then he is very unhappy. So to console him she tells him about her bee.

There is a bee
Whom I have fed, a bee who knows my thoughts
And executes my wishes: I will send
That messenger. If ever thou art false,
Drawn by another, own it not, but drive
My bee away; then shall I know my fate,
And—for thou must be wretched—weep at thine.

In other words, she vaguely threatens him, in case of unfaithfulness. It will make her very unhappy if he should love somebody else; but the result for him would be even worse.

From this point there is a considerable divergence between the treatment of the story by Landor and by the American author. Lowell represents the young man as rough, wine-flushed, playing for money with a number of riotous comrades. But, as you have already seen, such conduct would not be at all in accordance with Landor's conception of the character of Rhœcus, whom he depicts as an affectionate and gentle boy. In the English poem Rhœcus, or Rhaicos, does not play at draughts with rough compan-

ions, but only with his father; and he strikes the bee through the fault of forgetfulness only.

> Rhaicos was sitting at his father's hearth;
> Between them stood the table, not o'erspread
> With fruits which autumn now profusely bore,
> Nor anise cakes, nor odorous wine; but there
> The draught board was expanded; at which game
> Triumphant sat old Thallinos; the son
> Was puzzled, vexed, discomfited, distraught.
> A buzz was at his ear; up went his hand,
> And it was heard no longer. The poor bee
> Returned (but not until the morn shone bright)
> And found the Hamadryad with her head
> Upon her aching wrist, and show'd one wing
> Half-broken off, the other's meshes marr'd,
> And there were bruises which no eye could see
> Saving a Hamadryad's.

The use of the word "expanded" in speaking of the draught board may puzzle you; but the western draught board is commonly made so as to open and shut like a book, —indeed, it used to be the fashion to make these boards resemble when closed two large volumes bound in leather. The word "meshes," referring to the wing of the bee, signifies of course the reticulations of the wing, scientifically called "nerviores."

And now for the close, which is very briefly told. The youth heard the hamadryad utter a cry of pain; and he ran at once into the forest:

> No bark was on the tree, no leaf was green,
> The trunk was riven through. From that day forth
> Nor word nor whisper soothed his ear, nor sound
> Even of insect wing; but loud laments
> The woodmen and the shepherds one long year
> Heard day and night; for Rhaicos would not quit
> The solitary place, but moan'd and died.
> Hence milk and honey wonder not, O guest,
> To find set duly on the hollow stone.

The last lines refer to the Greek custom, so often described by Theocritus, of placing offerings of milk and honey before the places supposed to be haunted by a woodland divinity. In spite of some little modern touches, the whole conception of the story by Landor is quite Greek in its way,—and especially in its tenderness. If you will take the trouble some day to study the legend, you will easily see that it is one of those stories which never can grow old, and which neither Landor nor Lowell could exhaust. There is a strange vitality about Greek stories. A thousand different poets may take up the same Greek story century after century and write about it; yet the thing remains as fresh as ever, inviting still greater genius to do it justice. Some future Japanese poet might certainly find in the substance of this story the inspiration for a very pretty romance containing a very deep moral.

CHAPTER XIV

SOME POEMS ABOUT INSECTS

ONE of the great defects of English books printed in the last century is the want of an index. The importance of being able to refer at once to any subject treated of in a book was not recognised until the days when exact scholarship necessitated indexing of the most elaborate kind. But even now we constantly find good books severely criticised because of this deficiency. All that I have said tends to show that even to-day in western countries the immense importance of systematic arrangement in literary collections is not sufficiently recognised. We have, of course, a great many English anthologies,—that is to say, collections of the best typical compositions of a certain epoch in poetry or in prose. But you must have observed that, in western countries, nearly all such anthologies are compiled chronologically—not according to the subject of the poems. To this general rule there are indeed a few exceptions. There is a collection of love poetry by Watson, which is famous; a collection of child poetry by Patmore; a collection of "society verse" by Locker; and several things of that sort. But even here the arrangement is not of a special kind; nor is it ever divided according to the subject of each particular poem. I know that some books have been published of late years with such titles as "Poems of the Sea," "Poems of Nature"—but these are of no literary importance at all, and they are not compiled by competent critics. Besides, the subject-heads are always of much too general a kind. The French are far in advance of the English in the art of making anthologies; but even in such splendid anthologies as those of Crépet

and of Lemerre the arrangement is of the most general kind, —chronological, and little more.

I was reminded to tell you this, because of several questions recently asked me, which I found it impossible to answer. Many a Japanese student might suppose that western poetry has its classified arrangements corresponding in some sort to those of Japanese poetry. Perhaps the Germans have something of the kind, but the English and French have not. Any authority upon the subject of Japanese literature can, I have been told, inform himself almost immediately as to all that has been written in poetry upon a particular subject. Japanese poetry has been classified and sub-classified and double-indexed or even quadruple-indexed after a manner incomparably more exact than anything English anthologies can show. I am aware that this fact is chiefly owing to the ancient rules about subjects, seasons, contrasts, and harmonies, after which the old poets used to write. But whatever be said about such rules, there can be no doubt at all of the excellence of the arrangements which the rules produced. It is greatly to be regretted that we have not in English a system of arrangement enabling the student to discover quickly all that has been written upon a particular subject—such as roses, for example, or pine trees, or doves, or the beauties of the autumn season. There is nobody to tell you where to find such things; and as the whole range of English poetry is so great that it takes a great many years even to glance through it, a memorised knowledge of the subjects is impossible for the average man. I believe that Macaulay would have been able to remember almost any reference in the poetry then accessible to scholars,—just as the wonderful Greek scholar Porson could remember the exact place of any text in the whole of Greek literature, and even all the variations of that text. But such men are born only once in hundreds of years; the common memory can not attempt to emulate their feats. And it is very difficult at the present time for the ordinary

student of poetry to tell you just how much has been written upon any particular subject by the best English poets.

Now you will recognise some difficulties in the way of a lecturer in attempting to make classifications of English poetry after the same manner that Japanese classification can be made of Japanese poetry. One must read enormously merely to obtain one's materials, and even then the result is not to be thought of as exhaustive. I am going to try to give you a few lectures upon English poetry thus classified, but we must not expect that the lectures will be authoritatively complete. Indeed, we have no time for lectures of so thorough a sort. All that I can attempt will be to give you an idea of the best things that English poets have thought and expressed upon certain subjects.

You know that the old Greeks wrote a great deal of beautiful poetry about insects,—especially about musical insects, crickets, cicadæ, and other insects such as those the Japanese poets have been writing about for so many hundreds of years. But in modern western poetry there is very little, comparatively speaking, about insects. The English poets have all written a great deal about birds, and especially about singing birds; but very little has been written upon the subject of insects—singing insects. One reason is probably that the number of musical insects in England is very small, perhaps owing to the climate. American poets have written more about insects than English poets have done, though their work is of a much less finished kind. But this is because musical insects in America are very numerous. On the whole, we may say that neither in English nor in French poetry will you find much about the voices of crickets, locusts, or cicadæ. I could not even give you a special lecture upon that subject. We must take the subject "insect" in a rather general signification; and if we do that we can edit together a nice little collection of poetical examples.

The butterfly was regarded by the Greeks especially as

the emblem of the soul and therefore of immortality. We have several Greek remains, picturing the butterfly as perched upon a skull, thus symbolising life beyond death. And the metamorphosis of the insect is, you know, very often referred to in Greek philosophy. We might expect that English poets would have considered the butterfly especially from this point of view; and we do have a few examples. Perhaps the best known is that of Coleridge.

> The butterfly the ancient Grecians made
> The soul's fair emblem, and its only name—
> But of the soul, escaped the slavish trade
> Of earthly life! For in this mortal frame
> Ours is the reptile's lot, much toil, much blame,
> Manifold motions making little speed,
> And to deform and kill the things whereon we feed.

The allusion to the "name" is of course to the Greek word, *psyche*, which signifies both soul and butterfly. Psyche, as the soul, was pictured by the Greeks as a beautiful girl, with a somewhat sad face, and butterfly wings springing from her shoulders. Coleridge tells us here that although the Greeks likened the soul to the butterfly, we must remember what the butterfly really is,—the last and highest state of insect-being—"escaped the slavish trade of earthly life." What is this so-called slavish trade? It is the necessity of working and struggling in order to live—in order to obtain food. The butterfly is not much of an eater; some varieties, indeed, do not eat at all. All the necessity for eating ended with the life of the larva. In the same manner religion teaches that the soul represents the changed state of man. In this life a man is only like a caterpillar; death changes him into a chrysalis, and out of the chrysalis issues the winged soul which does not have to trouble itself about such matters as eating and drinking. By the word "reptile" in this verse, you must understand caterpillar. Therefore the poet speaks of all our human work as manifold motions making little speed; you have seen how many

motions a caterpillar must make in order to go even a little distance, and you must have noticed the manner in which it spoils the appearance of the plant upon which it feeds. There is here an allusion to the strange and terrible fact, that all life—and particularly the life of man—is maintained only by the destruction of other life. In order to live we must kill—perhaps only plants, but in any case we must kill.

Wordsworth has several poems on butterflies, but only one of them is really fine. It is fine, not because it suggests any deep problem, but because with absolute simplicity it pictures the charming difference of character in a little boy and a little girl playing together in the fields. The poem is addressed to the butterfly.

Stay near me—do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
  My father's family.

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey: with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her, feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

What we call and what looks like dust on the wings of a butterfly, English children are now taught to know as really beautiful scales or featherlets, but in Wordsworth's time the real structure of the insect was not so well known as now to little people. Therefore to the boy the coloured

matter brushed from the wings would only have seemed so much dust. But the little girl, with the instinctive tenderness of the future mother-soul in her, dreads to touch those strangely delicate wings; she fears, not only to spoil, but also to hurt.

Deeper thoughts than memory may still be suggested to English poets by the sight of a butterfly, and probably will be for hundreds of years to come. Perhaps the best poem of a half-metaphorical, half-philosophical thought about butterflies is the beautiful prologue to Browning's "Fifine at the Fair," which prologue is curiously entitled "Amphibian"—implying that we are about to have a reference to creatures capable of living in two distinctive elements, yet absolutely belonging neither to the one nor to the other. The poet swims out far into the sea on a beautiful day; and, suddenly, looking up, perceives a beautiful butterfly flying over his head, as if watching him. The sight of the insect at once suggests to him its relation to Greek fancy as a name for the soul; then he begins to wonder whether it might not really be the soul, or be the symbol of the soul, of a dead woman who loved him. From that point of the poem begins a little metaphysical fantasy about the possible condition of souls.

The fancy I had to-day,
Fancy which turned a fear!
I swam far out in the bay,
Since waves laughed warm and clear.

I lay and looked at the sun,
The noon-sun looked at me:
Between us two, no one
Live creature, that I could see.

Yes! There came floating by
Me, who lay floating too,
Such a strange butterfly!
Creature as dear as new:

Because the membraned wings
So wonderful, so wide,
So sun-suffused, were things
Like soul and nought beside.

So much for the conditions of the poet's revery. He is swimming in the sea; above his face, only a few inches away, the beautiful butterfly is hovering. Its apparition makes him think of many things—perhaps first about the dangerous position of the butterfly, for if it should only touch the water, it is certain to be drowned. But it does not touch the water; and he begins to think how clumsy is the man who moves in water compared with the insect that moves in air, and how ugly a man is by comparison with the exquisite creature which the Greeks likened to the soul or ghost of the man. Thinking about ghosts leads him at once to the memory of a certain very dear ghost about which he forthwith begins to dream.

What if a certain soul
Which early slipped its sheath,
And has for its home the whole
Of heaven, thus look beneath,

Thus watch one who, in the world,
Both lives and likes life's way,
Nor wishes the wings unfurled
That sleep in the worm, they say?

But sometimes when the weather
Is blue, and warm waves tempt
To free oneself of tether,
And try a life exempt

From worldly noise and dust,
In the sphere which overbrims
With passion and thought,—why, just
Unable to fly, one swims!

This is better understood by paraphrase: "I wonder if the soul of a certain person, who lately died, slipped so

gently out of the hard sheath of the perishable body—I wonder if she does not look down from her home in the sky upon me, just as that little butterfly is doing at this moment. And I wonder if she laughs at the clumsiness of this poor swimmer, who finds it so much labour even to move through the water, while she can move through whatever she pleases by the simple act of wishing. And this man, strangely enough, does not want to die, and to become a ghost. He likes to live very much; he does not yet desire those soul-wings which are supposed to be growing within the shell of his body, just as the wings of the butterfly begin to grow in the chrysalis. He does not want to die at all. But sometimes he wants to get away from the struggle and the dust of the city, and to be alone with nature; and then, in order to be perfectly alone, he swims. He would like to fly much better; but he can not. However, swimming is very much like flying, only the element of water is thicker than air."

However, more than the poet's words is suggested here. We are really told that what a fine mind desires is spiritual life, pure intellectual life—free from all the trammels of bodily necessity. Is not the swimmer really a symbol of the superior mind in its present condition? Your best swimmer can not live under the water, neither can he rise into the beautiful blue air. He can only keep his head in the air; his body must remain in the grosser element. Well, a great thinker and poet is ever thus—floating between the universe of spirit and the universe of matter. By his mind he belongs to the region of pure mind,—the ethereal state; but the hard necessity of living keeps him down in the world of sense and grossness and struggle. On the other hand the butterfly, freely moving in a finer element, better represents the state of spirit or soul.

What is the use of being dissatisfied with nature? The best we can do is to enjoy in the imagination those things which it is not possible for us to enjoy in fact.

Emancipate through passion
And thought, with sea for sky,
We substitute, in a fashion,
For heaven—poetry;

Which sea, to all intent,
Gives flesh such noon-disport,
As a finer element
Affords the spirit-sort.

Now you see where the poet's vision of a beautiful butterfly has been leading his imagination. The nearest approach which we can make to the act of flying, in the body, is the act of swimming. The nearest approach that we can make to the heavenly condition, mentally, is in poetry. Poetry, imagination, the pleasure of emotional expression—these represent our nearest approach to paradise. Poetry is the sea in which the soul of man can swim even as butterflies can swim in the air, or happy ghosts swim in the finer element of the infinite ether. The last three stanzas of the poem are very suggestive:

And meantime, yonder streak
Meets the horizon's verge;
That is the land, to seek
If we tire or dread the surge:

Land the solid and safe—
To welcome again (confess!)
When, high and dry, we chafe
The body, and don the dress.

Does she look, pity, wonder
At one who mimics flight,
Swims—heaven above, sea under,
Yet always earth in sight?

"Streak," meaning an indistinct line, here refers to the coast far away, as it appears to the swimmer. It is just such a word as a good Japanese painter ought to appreciate in such a relation. In suggesting that the swimmer is glad to

return to shore again and get warm, the poet is telling us that however much we may talk about the happiness of spirits in heaven—however much we may praise heaven in poetry—the truth is that we are very fond of this world, we like comfort, we like company, we like human love and human pleasures. There is a good deal of nonsense in pretending that we think heaven is a better place than the world to which we belong. Perhaps it is a better place, but, as a matter of fact, we do not know anything about it; and we should be frightened if we could go beyond a certain distance from the real world which we do know. As he tells us this, the poet begins again to think about the spirit of the dead woman. Is she happy? Is she looking at him—and pitying him as he swims, taking good care not to go too far away from the land? Or is she laughing at him, because in his secret thoughts he confesses that he likes to live—that he does not want to become a pure ghost at the present time?

Evidently a butterfly was quite enough, not only to make Browning's mind think very seriously, but to make that mind teach us the truth and seriousness which may attach to very small things—incidents, happenings of daily life, in any hour and place. I believe that is the greatest English poem we have on the subject of the butterfly.

The idea that a butterfly might be, not merely the symbol of the soul, but in very fact the spirit of a dead person, is somewhat foreign to English thought; and whatever exists in poetry on the subject must necessarily be quite new. The idea of a relation between insects, birds, or other living creatures, and the spirits of the dead, is enormously old in oriental literature;—we find it in Sanskrit texts thousands of years ago. But the western mind has not been accustomed to think of spiritual life as outside of man; and much of natural poetry has consequently remained undeveloped in western countries. A strange little poem, "The White Moth," is an exception to the general rule that I have in-

dicated; but I am almost certain that its author, A. T. Quiller-Couch, must have read oriental books, or obtained his fancy from some eastern source. As the knowledge of Indian literature becomes more general in England, we may expect to find poetry much influenced by oriental ideas. At the present time, such a composition as this is quite a strange anomaly.

If a leaf rustled, she would start:
And yet she died, a year ago.
How had so frail a thing the heart
To journey where she trembled so?
And do they turn and turn in fright,
Those little feet, in so much night?

The light above the poet's head
Streamed on the page and on the cloth,
And twice and thrice there buffeted
On the black pane a white-winged moth:
'Twas Annie's soul that beat outside,
And "Open, open, open!" cried:

"I could not find the way to God;
There were too many flaming suns
For signposts, and the fearful road
Led over wastes where millions
Of tangled comets hissed and burned—
I was bewildered and I turned.

"Oh, it was easy then! I knew
Your window and no star beside.
Look up and take me back to you!"
He rose and thrust the window wide.
'Twas but because his brain was hot
With rhyming; for he heard her not.

But poets polishing a phrase
Show anger over trivial things;
And as she blundered in the blaze
Towards him, on ecstatic wings,
He raised a hand and smote her dead;
Then wrote "*That I had died instead!*"

The lover, or bereaved husband, is writing a poem of which a part is given in the first stanza—which is therefore put in italics. The action proper begins with the second stanza. The soul of the dead woman taps at the window in the shape of a night-butterfly or moth—imagining, perhaps, that she has still a voice and can make herself heard by the man that she loves. She tells the story of her wandering in space—privileged to pass to heaven, yet afraid of the journey. Now the subject of the poem which the lover happens to be writing inside the room is a memory of the dead woman—mourning for her, describing her in exquisite ways. He can not hear her at all; he does not hear even the beating of the little wings at the window, but he stands up and opens the window—because he happens to feel hot and tired. The moth thinks that he has heard her, that he knows; and she flies toward him in great delight. But he, thinking that it is only a troublesome insect, kills her with a blow of his hand; and then sits down to continue his poem with the words, "Oh, how I wish I could have died instead of that dear woman!" Altogether this is a queer poem in English literature, and I believe almost alone of its kind. But it is queer only because of its rarity of subject. As for construction, it is very good indeed.

I do not know that it is necessary to quote any more poems upon butterflies or moths. There are several others; but the workmanship and the thought are not good enough or original enough to justify their use here as class texts. So I shall now turn to the subject of dragon-flies. Here we must again be very brief. References to dragon-flies are common throughout English poetry, but the references signify little more than a mere colourless mention of the passing of the insect. However, it so happens that the finest modern lines of pure description written about any insect, are about dragon-flies. And they also happen to be by Tennyson. Naturalists and men of science have greatly praised these lines, because of their truth to nature and the accuracy of

observation which they show. You will find them in the poem entitled "The Two Voices."

To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk; from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

He dried his wings; like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living rush of light he flew.

There are very few real poems, however, upon the dragon-fly in English, and considering the extraordinary beauty and grace of the insect, this may appear strange to you. But I think that you can explain the strangeness at a later time. The silence of English poets on the subject of insects as compared with Japanese poets is due to general causes that we shall consider at the close of the lecture.

Common flies could scarcely seem to be a subject for poetry—disgusting and annoying creatures as they are. But there are more poems about the house-fly than about the dragon-fly. Last year I quoted for you a remarkable and rather mystical composition by the poet Blake about accidentally killing a fly. Blake represents his own thoughts about the brevity of human life which had been aroused by the incident. It is a charming little poem; but it does not describe the fly at all. I shall not quote it here again, because we shall have many other things to talk about; but I shall give you the text of a famous little composition by Oldys on the same topic. It has almost the simplicity of Blake,—and certainly something of the same kind of philosophy.

Busy, curious, thirsty fly,
Drink with me, and drink as I;
Freely welcome to my cup,
Couldst thou sip and sip it up.

Make the most of life you may,
Life is short and wears away.

Both alike are mine and thine
Hastening quick to their decline;
Thine's a summer, mine's no more,
Though repeated to threescore;
Threescore summers, when they're gone,
Will appear as short as one.

The suggestion is that, after all, time is only a very relative affair in the cosmic order of things. The life of the man of sixty years is not much longer than the life of the insect which lives but a few hours, days, or months. Had Oldys, who belongs to the eighteenth century, lived in our own time, he might have been able to write something very much more curious on this subject. It is now known that time, to the mind of an insect, must appear immensely longer than it appears to the mind of a man. It has been calculated that a mosquito or a gnat moves its wings between four and five hundred times a second. Now the scientific dissection of such an insect, under the microscope, justifies the opinion that the insect must be conscious of each beat of the wings—just as a man feels that he lifts his arm or bends his head every time that the action is performed. A man can not even imagine the consciousness of so short an interval of time as the five-hundredth part of one second. But insect consciousness can be aware of such intervals; and a single day of life might well appear to the gnat as long as the period of a month to a man. Indeed, we have reason to suppose that to even the shortest lived insect life does not appear short at all; and that the ephemera may actually, so far as feeling is concerned, live as long as a man—although its birth and death does occur between the rising and the setting of the sun.

We might suppose that bees would form a favourite subject of poetry, especially in countries where apiculture is practised upon such a scale as in England. But such is

not really the case. Nearly every English poet makes some reference to bees, as Tennyson does in the famous couplet—

> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees.

But the only really remarkable poem addressed to a bee is by the American philosopher Emerson. The poem in question can not be compared as to mere workmanship with some others which I have cited; but as to thinking, it is very interesting, and you must remember that the philosopher who writes poetry should be judged for his thought rather than for the measure of his verse. The whole is not equally good, nor is it short enough to quote entire; I shall only give the best parts.

> Burly, dozing humble-bee,
> Where thou art is clime for me.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
> Let me chase thy waving lines;
> Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
> Singing over shrubs and vines.
>
> Insect lover of the sun,
> Joy of thy dominion!
> Sailor of the atmosphere;
> Swimmer through the waves of air;
> Voyager of light and noon;
> Epicurean of June;
> Wait, I prithee, till I come
> Within earshot of thy hum,—
> All without is martyrdom.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Thou, in sunny solitudes,
> Rover of the underwoods,
> The green silence dost displace
> With thy mellow, breezy bass.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Aught unsavory or unclean
> Hath my insect never seen.
>
> . . . . . .

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.

This is really the poetry of the bee—visiting only beautiful flowers, and sucking from them their perfumed juices—always healthy, happy, and surrounded by beautiful things. A great rover, a constant wanderer is the bee—visiting many different places, seeing many different things, but stopping only to enjoy what is beautiful to the sight and sweet to the taste. Now Emerson tells us that a wise man should act like the bee—never stopping to look at what is bad, or what is morally ugly, but seeking only what is beautiful and nourishing for the mind. It is a very fine thought; and the manner of expressing it is greatly helped by Emerson's use of curious and forcible words—such as "burly," "zigzag," and the famous expression "yellow breeched philosopher"—which has passed almost into an American household phrase. The allusion of course is to the thighs of the bee, covered with the yellow pollen of flowers so as to make them seem covered with yellow breeches, or trousers reaching only to the knees.

I do not of course include in the lecture such child songs about insects as that famous one beginning with the words, "How does the little busy bee improve each shining hour." This is no doubt didactically very good; but I wish to offer you only examples of really fine poetry on the topic. Therefore leaving the subject of bees for the time, let us turn to the subject of musical insects—the singers of the fields and woods—grasshoppers and crickets.

In Japanese poetry there are thousands of verses upon such insects. Therefore it seems very strange that we have scarcely anything on the subject in English. And the little that we do have is best represented by the poem of Keats

on the night cricket. The reference is probably to what we call in England the hearth cricket, an insect which hides in houses, making itself at home in some chink of the brick work or stone work about a fireplace, for it loves the warmth. I suppose that the small number of poems in English about crickets can be partly explained by the scarcity of night singers. Only the house cricket seems to be very well known. But on the other hand, we can not so well explain the rarity of composition in regard to the day-singers—the grasshoppers and locusts which can be heard, though somewhat faintly, in any English country place after sunset during the warm season. Another queer thing is that the example set by Keats has not been imitated or at least followed even up to the present time.

> The poetry of earth is never dead:
> When all the birds are faint with the hot sun, etc.

In this charming composition you will have noticed the word "stove"; but you must remember that this is not a stove as we understand the term now, and signifies only an old fashioned fireplace of brick or tile. In Keats's day there were no iron stoves. Another word which I want to notice is the word "poetry" in the first line. By the poetry of nature the poet means the voices of nature—the musical sounds made by its idle life in woods and fields. So the word "poetry" here has especially the meaning of song, and corresponds very closely to the Japanese word which signifies either poem or song, but perhaps more especially the latter. The general meaning of the sonnet is that at no time, either in winter or in summer, is nature silent. When the birds do not sing, the grasshoppers make music for us; and when the cold has killed or banished all other life, then the house cricket begins with its thin sweet song to make us think of the dead voices of the summer.

There is not much else of note about the grasshopper and the cricket in the works of the great English poets. But

perhaps you do not know that Tennyson in his youth took up the subject and made a long poem upon the grasshopper, but suppressed it after the edition of 1842. He did not think it good enough to rank with his other work. But a few months ago the poems which Tennyson suppressed in the final edition of his works have been published and carefully edited by an eminent scholar, and among these poems we find "The Grasshopper." I will quote some of this poem, because it is beautiful, and because the fact of its suppression will serve to show you how very exact and careful Tennyson was to preserve only the very best things that he wrote.

Voice of the summer wind,
Joy of the summer plain,
Life of the summer hours,
Carol clearly, bound along,
No Tithon thou as poets feign
(Shame fall 'em, they are deaf and blind),
But an insect lithe and strong
Bowing the seeded summer flowers.
Prove their falsehood and thy quarrel,
Vaulting on thine airy feet
Clap thy shielded sides and carol,
Carol clearly, chirrups sweet.
Thou art a mailéd warrior in youth and strength complete;
Armed-cap-a-pie,
Full fair to see;
Unknowing fear,
Undreading loss,
A gallant cavalier,
Sans peur et sans reproche,
In sunlight and in shadow,
The Bayard of the meadow.

The reference to Tithonus is a reference of course to a subject afterwards beautifully elaborated in another poem by Tennyson, the great poem of "Tithonus." The Bayard here referred to was the great French model of perfect

chivalry, and is sometimes called the last of the feudal knights. He was said to be without fear and without blame. You may remember that he was killed by a ball from a gun—it was soon after the use of artillery in war had been introduced; and his dying words were to the effect that he feared there was now an end of great deeds, because men had begun to fight from a distance with machines instead of fighting in the old knightly and noble way with sword and spear. The grasshopper, covered with green plates and bearing so many little sharp spines upon its long limbs, seems to have suggested to Tennyson the idea of a fairy knight in green armour.

As I said before, England is poor in singing insects, while America is rich in them—almost, perhaps, as rich as Japan, although you will not find as many different kinds of singing insects in any one state or district. The singing insects of America are peculiar to particular localities. But the eastern states have perhaps the most curious insect of this kind. It is called the Katydid. This name is spelt either Katydid, or Catydid—though the former spelling is preferable. Katy, or Katie, is the abbreviation of the name Catherine; very few girls are called by the full name Catherine, also spelt Katherine); because the name is long and unmusical, their friends address them usually as Katy, and their acquaintances, as Kate. Well, the insect of which I am speaking, a kind of *semi*, makes a sound resembling the sound of the words "Katie did!" Hence the name—one of the few corresponding to the names given to the Japanese *semi*, such as *tsuku-tsuku-boshi*, or *minmin-semi*. The most interesting composition upon this cicada is by Oliver Wendell Holmes, but it is of the lighter sort of verse, with a touch of humour in it. I shall quote a few verses only, as the piece contains some allusions that would require explanation at considerable length.

I love to hear thine earnest voice,
Wherever thou art hid,

Thou testy little dogmatist,
  Thou pretty Katydid!
Thou mindest me of gentlefolks,—
  Old gentlefolks are they,—
Thou sayst an undisputed thing
  In such a solemn way.

. . . . . .

Oh tell me where did Katy live,
  And what did Katy do?
And was she very fair and young,
  And yet so wicked too?
Did Katy love a naughty man,
  Or kiss more cheeks than one?
I warrant Katy did no more
  Than many a Kate has done.

. . . . . .

Ah, no! The living oak shall crash,
  That stood for ages still,
The rock shall rend its mossy base
  And thunder down the hill,
Before the little Katydid
  Shall add one word to tell
The mystic story of the maid
  Whose name she knows so well.

The word "testy" may be a little unfamiliar to some of you; it is a good old fashioned English term for "cross," "irritable." The reference to the "old gentlefolks" implies the well known fact that in argument old persons are inclined to be much more obstinate than young people. And there is also a hint in the poem of the tendency among old ladies to blame the conduct of young girls even more severely than may be necessary. There is nothing else to recommend the poem except its wit and the curiousness of the subject. There are several other verses about the same creature, by different American poets; but none of them is quite so good as the composition of Holmes. However, I may cite a few verses from one of the earlier American poets, Philip Freneau, who flourished in the eighteenth century and the early

part of the nineteenth. He long anticipated the fancy of Holmes; but he spells the word Catydid.

In a branch of willow hid,
Sings the evening Catydid:
From the lofty locust bough
Feeding on a drop of dew,
In her suit of green arrayed
Hear her singing in the shade—
  Catydid, Catydid, Catydid!

While upon a leaf you tread,
Or repose your little head
On your sheet of shadows laid,
All the day you nothing said;
Half the night your cheery tongue
Revelled out its little song,—
  Nothing else but Catydid.

. . . . . .

Tell me, what did Caty do?
Did she mean to trouble you?
Why was Caty not forbid
To trouble little Catydid?
Wrong, indeed, at you to fling,
Hurting no one while you sing,—
  Catydid! Catydid! Catydid!

To Dr. Holmes the voice of the cicada seemed like the voice of an old obstinate woman, an old prude, accusing a young girl of some fault,—but to Freneau the cry of the little creature seemed rather to be like the cry of a little child complaining—a little girl, perhaps, complaining that somebody had been throwing stones at her, or had hurt her in some way. And, of course, the unfinished character of the phrase allows equally well either supposition.

Before going back to more serious poetry, I want—while we are speaking of American poets—to make one reference to the ironical or satirical poetry which insects have inspired in some minds, taking for example the poem by Charlotte Perkins Stetson about a butterfly. This author is rather a

person of note, being a prominent figure in educational reforms and the author of a volume of poems of a remarkably strong kind in the didactic sense. In other words, she is especially a moral poet; and unless moral poetry be really very well executed, it is scarcely worth while classing it as literature. I think, however, that the symbolism in the following verses will interest you—especially when we comment upon them. The composition from which they are taken is entitled "A Conservative."

The poet, walking in the garden one morning, sees a butterfly, very unhappy, and gifted with power to express the reason of its unhappiness. The butterfly says, complaining of its wings,

"My legs are thin and few
Where once I had a swarm!
Soft fuzzy fur—a joy to view—
Once kept my body warm,
Before these flapping wing-things grew,
To hamper and deform!"

At that outrageous bug I shot
The fury of mine eye;
Said I, in scorn all burning hot,
In rage and anger high,
"You ignominious idiot,
Those wings were made to fly!"

"I do not want to fly," said he,
"I only want to squirm!"
He drooped his wings dejectedly,
But still his voice was firm:
"I do not want to be a fly!
I want to be a worm!"

O yesterday of unknown lack!
To-day of unknown bliss!
I left my fool in red and black;
The last I saw was this,—
The creature madly climbing back
Into his chrysalis.

Of course the wings here represent the powers of the mind —knowledge, reason, will. Men ought to use these in order to reach still nobler and higher states of life. But there are men who refuse to use their best faculties for this end. Such men are like butterflies who do not want to take the trouble to fly, but prefer the former condition of the caterpillar which does nothing but eat and sleep. As applied to certain forms of conservatism the satire is strong.

Something may now be said as to poems about spiders. But let me remind you that a spider is not an insect. Scientifically it has no relation to the great family of true insects; it belongs to the very distinct family of the arthropoda or "joint-footed" animals. But as it is still popularly called an insect in most European countries, we may be excused for including it in the subject of the present lecture. I suppose you know that one of the scientific names for this whole class of creatures is Arachnida,—a name derived from the Greek name Arachne. The story of Arachne is interesting, and everybody studying natural history ought to know it. Arachne was a young girl, according to the Greek story, who was very skilful at weaving. She wove cloths of many different colours and beautiful patterns, and everybody admired her work. This made her vain—so vain that at last she said that even the goddess of weaving could not weave better than she. Immediately after she had said that, the terrible goddess herself—Pallas Athena—entered the room. Pallas Athena was not only the goddess of wisdom, you know, but especially the goddess of young girls, presiding over the chastity, the filial piety, and the domestic occupations of virgins; and she was very angry at the conceit of this girl. So she said to her, "You have boasted that you can weave as well as I can; now let me see you weave!" So Arachne was obliged to sit down at her loom and weave in the presence of the goddess; and the goddess also wove, far surpassing the weaving of Arachne. When the weaving was done, the goddess asked the girl, "Now see! which

is the better, my work or yours?" And Arachne was obliged to confess that she had been defeated and put to shame. But the goddess was not thoroughly satisfied; to punish Arachne, she touched her lightly with the distaff, saying, "Spin forever!" and thereupon Arachne was changed into a spider, which forever spins and weaves perishable films of perishable shiny thread. Poetically we still may call a spider Arachne.

I have here a little poem of a touching character entitled "Arachne," by Rose Terry Cooke,—one of the symbolic poems which are becoming so numerous in these days of newer and deeper philosophy. I think that you will like it: a spinster, that is, a maiden passed the age of girlhood, is the speaker.

I watch her in the corner there,
As, restless, bold and unafraid,
She slips and floats along the air
Till all her subtile house is made.

Her home, her bed, her daily food,
All from that hidden store she draws;
She fashions it and knows it good,
By instinct's strong and sacred laws.

No tenuous threads to weave her nest,
She seeks and gathers there or here;
But spins it from her faithful breast,
Renewing still, till leaves are sere.

Then, worn with toil, and tired of life,
In vain her shining traps are set.
The frost hath hushed the insect strife
And gilded flies her charm forget.

But swinging in the snares she spun,
She sways to every wintry wind:
Her joy, her toil, her errand done,
Her corse the sport of storms unkind.

The symbolism of these verses will appear to you more significant when I tell you that it refers especially to con-

ditions in New England in the present period. The finest American population—perhaps the finest Anglo-Saxons ever produced—were the New Englanders of the early part of the century. But with the growth of the new century, the men found themselves attracted elsewhere, especially westward; their shrewdness, their energies, their inventiveness, were needed in newer regions. And they wandered away by thousands and thousands, never to come back again, and leaving the women behind them. Gradually the place of these men was taken by immigrants of inferior development—but the New England women had nothing to hope for from these strangers. The bravest of them also went away to other states; but myriads who could not go were condemned by circumstances to stay and earn their living by hard work without any prospect of happy marriage. The difficulty which a girl of culture may experience in trying to live by the work of her hands in New England is something not easily imagined. But it is getting to be the same in most western countries. Such a girl is watching a spider weaving in the corner of the same room where she herself is weaving; and she thinks, "Am I not like that spider, obliged to supply my every need by the work of my own hands, without sympathy, without friends? The spider will spin and catch flies until the autumn comes; then she will die. Perhaps I too must continue to spin until the autumn of my own life—until I become too old to work hard, and die of cold and of exhaustion."

Poor sister of the spinster clan!
I too from out my store within
My daily life and living plan,
My home, my rest, my pleasure spin.

I know thy heart when heartless hands
Sweep all that hard-earned web away;
Destroy its pearled and glittering bands,
And leave thee homeless by the way.

I know thy peace when all is done,
Each anchored thread, each tiny knot,
Soft shining in the autumn sun;
A sheltered, silent, tranquil lot.

I know what thou hast never known,—
Sad presage to a soul allowed—
That not for life I spin, alone,
But day by day I spin my shroud.

The reference to the sweeping away of the spider's web, of course, implies the pain often caused to such hardworking girls by the meanness of men who employ them only to cheat them—shopkeepers or manufacturers who take their work without justly paying for it, and who criticise it as bad in order to force the owner to accept less money than it is worth. Again a reference may be intended to the destruction of the home by some legal trick—some unscrupulous method of cheating the daughter out of the property bequeathed to her by her parents.

Notice a few pretty words here. The "pearled" as applied to the spider's thread gives an intimation of the effect produced by dew on the thread, but there is also the suggestion of tears upon the thread work woven by the hands of the girl. The participle "anchored" is very pretty in its use here as an adjective, because this word is now especially used for rope-fastening, whether the rope be steel or hemp; and particularly for the fastening of the cables of a bridge. The last stanza might be paraphrased thus: "Sister Spider, I know more than you—and that knowledge makes me unhappy. You do not know, when you are spinning your little web, that you are really weaving your own shroud. But I know this, my work is slowly but surely killing me. And I know it because I have a soul—at least a mind made otherwise than yours."

The use of the word "soul" in the last stanza of this poem, brings me back to the question put forth in an earlier part of the lecture,—why European poets, during the last

two thousand years, have written so little upon the subject of insects? Three thousand, four thousand years ago, the most beautiful Greek poetry—poetry more perfect than anything of English poetry—was written upon insects. In old Japanese literature poems upon insects are to be found by thousands. What is the signification of the great modern silence in western countries upon this delightful topic? I believe that Christianity, as dogma, accounts for the long silence. The opinions of the early church refused soul, ghost, intelligence of any sort to other creatures than man. All animals were considered as automata—that is, as self-acting machines, moved by a something called instinct, for want of a better name. To talk about the souls of animals or the spirits of animals would have been very dangerous in the Middle Ages, when the church had supreme power; it would indeed have been to risk or to invite an accusation of witchcraft, for demons were then thought to take the shape of animals at certain times. To discuss the *mind* of an animal would have been for the Christian faith to throw doubt upon the existence of human souls as taught by the church; for if you grant that animals are able to think, then you must acknowledge that man is able to think without a soul, or you must acknowledge that the soul is not the essential principle of thought and action. Until after the time of Descartes, who later argued philosophically that animals were only machines, it was scarcely possible to argue rationally about the matter in Europe.

Nevertheless, we shall soon perceive that this explanation will not cover all the facts. You will naturally ask how it happens that, if the question be a question of animal souls, birds, horses, dogs, cats, and many other animals have been made the subject of western poems from ancient times. The silence is only upon the subject of insects. And, again, Christianity has one saint—the most beautiful character in all Christian hagiography—who thought of all nature in a

manner that, at first sight, strangely resembles Buddhism. This saint was Francis of Assissi, born in the latter part of the twelfth century, so that he may be said to belong to the very heart of the Middle Ages,—the most superstitious epoch of Christianity. Now this saint used to talk to trees and stones as if they were animated beings. He addressed the sun as "my brother sun"; and he spoke of the moon as his sister. He preached not only to human beings, but also to the birds and the fishes; and he made a great many poems on these subjects, full of a strange and childish beauty. For example, his sermon to the doves, beginning, "My little sisters, the doves," in which he reminds them that their form is the emblem or symbol of the Holy Ghost, is a beautiful poem; and has been, with many others, translated into nearly all modern languages. But observe that neither St. Francis nor any other saint has anything to say on the subject of insects.

Perhaps we must go back further than Christianity to guess the meaning of these distinctions. Among the ancient races of Asia, where the Jewish faith arose, there were strange and sinister beliefs about insects—old Assyrian superstitions, old Babylonian beliefs. Insects seemed to those early peoples very mysterious creatures (which they really are); and it appears to have been thought that they had a close relation to the world of demons and evil spirits. I suppose you know that the name of one of their gods, Beelzebub, signified the Lord of Flies. The Jews, as is shown by their Talmudic literature, inherited some of these ideas; and it is quite probable that they were passed on to the days of Christianity. Again, in the early times of Christianity in northern Africa the church had to fight against superstitions of an equally strange sort derived from old Egyptian beliefs. Among the Egyptians, certain insects were sacred and became symbols of divinity,—such as the beetle. Now I imagine that for these reasons the subject of insects be-

came at an early time a subject which Christianity thought dangerous, and that thereafter a kind of hostile opinion prevailed regarding any literature upon this topic.

However, to-day things are very different. With the development of scientific studies—especially of microscopic study—it has been found that insects, far from being the lowliest of creatures, are the most highly organised of all beings; that their special senses are incomparably superior to our own; and that in natural history, from the evolutional standpoint, they have to be given first place. This of course renders it impossible any longer to consider the insect as a trifling subject. Moreover, the new philosophy is teaching the thinking classes in all western countries the great truth of the unity of life. With the recognition of such unity, an insect must interest the philosophers—even the man of ordinary culture—quite as much as the bird or any other animal.

Nearly all the poems which I have quoted to you have been poems of very modern date—from which we may infer that interest in the subject of insects has been developing of late years only. In this connection it is interesting to note that a very religious poet, Whittier, gave us in the last days of his life a poem upon ants. This would have seemed strange enough in a former age; it does not seem strange to-day, and it is beautiful. The subject is taken from old Jewish literature.

KING SOLOMON AND THE ANTS

Out from Jerusalem,
  The King rode with his great
  War chiefs and lords of state;
And Sheba's queen with them,

Comely, but black withal,
  To whom, perchance, belongs
  That wondrous Song of Songs
Sensuous and mystical,

Whereto devout souls turn
  In fond, ecstatic dream,
  And through its earth-born theme
The Love of Loves discern.

Proud in the Syrian sun
  In gold and purple sheen,
  The dusky Ethiop queen
Smiled on King Solomon.

Wisest of men, he knew
  The languages of all
  The creatures great or small
That trod the earth or flew.

Across an ant-hill led
  The king's path; and he heard
  Its small folk, and their word
He thus interpreted:

"Here comes the king men greet
  As wise and good and just,
  To crush us in the dust
Under his heedless feet."

The king, understanding the language of insects, turns to the queen and explains to her what the ants have just said. She advises him to pay no attention to the sarcasm of the ants—how dare such vile creatures speak thus about a king! But Solomon thinks otherwise:

"Nay," Solomon replied,
  "The wise and strong should seek
  The welfare of the weak,"
And turned his horse aside.

His train, with quick alarm,
  Curved with their leader round
  The ant-hill's peopled mound,
And left it free from harm.

The jewelled head bent low:
  "Oh, king!" she said, "henceforth

The secret of thy worth
And wisdom well I know.

"Happy must be the state
Whose ruler heedeth more
The murmurs of the poor
Than flatteries of the great."

The reference to the Song of Songs—also the Song of Solomon and Canticle of Canticles—may require a little explanation. The line "Comely but black withal," is borrowed from a verse of this song—"I am black but beautiful, oh, ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." In another part of the song the reason of this blackness is given: "I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me." From which we can see that the word black only means dark, brown, tanned by the sun. Perhaps you do not know that as late as the middle of the eighteenth century it was still the custom in England to speak of a person with black hair and eyes as "a black man"—a custom which Charles Lamb had reason to complain of even at a later day. The tents referred to in the text were probably tents made of camel-skin, such as the Arabs still make, and the colour of these is not black but brown. Whether Solomon wrote the so-called song or not we do not know; but the poet refers to a legend that it was written in praise of the beauty of the dark queen who came from Sheba to visit the wisest man of the world. Such is not, however, the opinion of modern scholars. The composition is really dramatic, although thrown into lyrical form, and as arranged by Renan and others it becomes a beautiful little play, of which each act is a monologue. "Sensuous" the poet correctly calls it; for it is a form of praise of woman's beauty in all is details, as appears in such famous verses as these: "How beautiful are thy feet in shoes, O prince's daughter; the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins which feed

among the lilies." But Christianity, instead of dismissing this part of the Bible, interpreted the song mystically—insisting that the woman described meant the church, and the lover, Christ. Of course only very pious people continue to believe this; even the good Whittier preferred the legend that it was written about the Queen of Sheba.

I suppose that I ought to end this lecture upon insect poetry by some quotation to which a moral or philosophical meaning can be attached. I shall end it therefore with a quotation from the poet Gray. The poetry of insects may be said to have first appeared in English literature during the second half of the eighteenth century, so that it is only, at the most, one hundred and fifty years old. But the first really fine poem of the eighteenth century relating to the subject is quite as good as anything since composed by Englishmen upon insect-life in general. Perhaps Gray referred especially to what we call May-flies—those delicate ghostly insects which hover above water surfaces in fine weather, but which die on the same day that they are born. He does not specify May-flies, however, and we may consider the moral of the poem quite apart from any particular kind of insects. You will find this reference in the piece entitled "Ode on the Spring," in the third, fourth, and fifth stanzas.

Still is the toiling hand of care:
  The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how through the peopled air
  The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gaily-gilded trim
  Quick-glancing to the sun.

To contemplation's sober eye
  Such is the race of man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
  Shall end where they began.

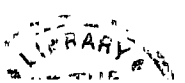
Alike the Busy and the Gay
But flutter through life's little day,
In fortune's varying colours dressed:
Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chilled by Age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set; thy spring is gone—
We frolic, while 'tis May.

The poet Gray was never married, and the last stanza which I have quoted refers jocosely to himself. It is an artistic device to set off the moral by a little mockery, so that it may not appear too melancholy. Seeing the insects sporting in the bright weather, but all doomed so soon to die, the poet first thinks:

"Well, men are just like insects after all, in the eternal order of things. Some insects can only creep, while others can fly; some insects can store up honey or grain; some live only a few hours; some live for a season. In like manner, some men are stupid and are unable to succeed in the world; whereas others rise to honour, accumulate wealth, reach honoured old age and see their children prosper. But the end is the same for all men, as it is for the insect,—dust." But then the poet fancies that he hears the voice of the insects reproaching him, and asking him: "What are you yourself, compared with an insect? You are not, perhaps, quite so good as an insect. For the insect at least fulfils its life upon earth; the male finds its female; the honey or the grain is stored up; and the joy of life is found by us. But you—what have you done in this world? You have no

wife; you have no treasures; you have had no real part in the enjoyment of this world. And therefore however you may moralise, perhaps you are not worthy to compare yourself even with the bee or the ant or the dragon-fly that does its little duty in this impermanent state of existence."



CHAPTER XV

ON BIRDS IN ENGLISH POETRY

THE poetry of birds is quite important, for it happens to contain several of the great masterpieces of English lyrical poetry. In point of variety, however, the subject may prove a little disappointing. There are not many different kinds of birds with a special place in English lyrical verse. The best of English poetry treats of the nightingale only. Just as the greater number of our flower poems are about the rose, so the greater number of our bird poems are about the nightingale.

To understand the best poems about the nightingale it is necessary for us to go back for a moment to old Greek mythological poetry, for English poems on that bird are rich in allusions to the Greek story about its origin. If you do not know the story, you can not understand the verses of Matthew Arnold or of Swinburne on the nightingale. Neither can you understand allusions in English literature which are certainly older than the time of Shakespeare.

The story is very horrible; but we must learn it. There was a mythical king of Athens called Pandion; and Pandion had two beautiful daughters, one of whom was named Procne, and the other Philomela. Now it happened that King Pandion was for a time hard beset by strong enemies; and he sent in all haste to the king of Thrace, whose name was Tereus, to help him. Then Tereus helped Pandion, and Pandion gave him in marriage his daughter Procne as a reward; and Tereus took Procne away with him to his own city of Daulis, where she bore him a son called Itys, or Itylus. After a time Procne wanted very much to see again

her sister Philomela, and she asked Tereus her husband to go to Athens for Philomela. Tereus then went to Athens for Philomela; but on the way back he ravished her, and then cut out her tongue for fear that she would tell Procne. He left her in the wood alone with her tongue cut out. Then he went to Daulis and told Procne a lie, saying that Philomela had died on the journey. Poor Philomela could not talk, but she had not forgotten how to weave; and she found her way to the cottage of some peasant, and there, upon a loom, she was able to weave a dress, and in weaving the dress she made Greek letters along the border so as to tell the dreadful story of what had been done to her; and that dress she sent to her sister. So Procne determined to avenge her sister terribly; and she killed her own little boy, Itylus, and cooked his flesh and served it up at dinner to the unsuspecting father. After he had eaten of the dish, she told him what he had eaten, and then fled away in company with her dumb sister. Tereus pursued them, and they prayed to the gods to save them. Now the gods heard their prayers—Philomela was turned into a nightingale, and Procne was turned into a swallow. Tereus and the murdered Itylus were also turned into birds of other kinds. But that need not concern us here. Enough to say that in the cry of the nightingale the Greek poets imagined that they could distinguish the syllables "Teru-Teru," meaning "Tereus"; and that in the cry of the swallow they could distinguish the syllables "Itu-Itu," meaning "Itylus." And although this story is rather long, you must try to remember the whole of it in order to understand the modern as well as the old fashioned allusions contained in English poems on the nightingale. Also, there is one other thing to remember—that the Greek mythologists themselves did not agree as to which sister became the nightingale. Some said it was Philomela; and others said it was Procne. But the Latin writers decided in favour of Philomela, and the English poets at first followed the Latin writers; even before the

time of Shakespeare in England the name Philomela, or Philomelus, was generally accepted for the nightingale.

In proof of this I may quote to you a very old poem about the nightingale, composed in the sixteenth century at some uncertain date. We know that it is older than Shakespeare, because Shakespeare quotes it in his terrible tragedy "King Lear." But it is otherwise interesting as being the earliest poem containing an allusion to the story of which I speak. Its author is Barnefield; and the poem is simply entitled "The Nightingale." Before quoting it let me remind you of the chorus in the fairy lullaby, or serenade, of Shakespeare's comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream":

> Philomel, with melody,
> Sing in our sweet lullaby,
> Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby.
> Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
> Come our lovely lady nigh;
> So good night, with lullaby.

This shows that even the common play-going public had already become accustomed to the name Philomela, for the nightingale, in Shakespeare's day. But the poem of Barnefield, which is older, is more interesting; for it contains most of the classical allusion used in our own time even by the poet Swinburne.

> As it fell upon a day
> In the merry month of May,
> Sitting in a pleasant shade
> Which a grove of myrtles made,
> Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
> Trees did grow and plants did spring,
> Everything did banish moan
> Save the Nightingale alone.
> She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
> Leaned her breast up-till a thorn,
> And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,
> That to hear it was great pity.

FIE, FIE, FIE, now would she cry;
TEREU, TEREU, by and by;
That to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs so lively shown
Made me think upon my own.
Ah, thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,
None takes pity on thy pain:
Senseless trees, they can not hear thee,
Ruthless beasts, they will not cheer thee:
King Pandion he is dead,
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead;
All thy fellow birds do sing
Careless of thy sorrowing.

Easy as this little song is to read, you could not understand several lines in it without knowing the story;—only the story explains to us why the bird should cry "Tereu, tereu" and "Fie, fie," which means for shame; why King Pandion should be spoken of; or why all the nightingale's friends should be spoken of as "lapped in lead" (referring to the old custom of burying the dead in leaden coffins). I quoted this poem as an illustration of the allusions only—not for its great age. If we wanted anything very old on the subject, we might go to Homer, who in the nineteenth book of the Odyssey represents the brown nightingale as lamenting for the boy Itylus. But we need only refer to modern English literature hereafter, for that contains the jewels of this poetry.

I shall begin with Swinburne; for, notwithstanding the splendour of Keats, Swinburne's "Itylus" must be considered as the very greatest of all modern poems on the nightingale—whether English or French or Italian or anything else. It is the greatest because of the extraordinary beauty and music of the prosody, and the intensity of the emotion in it. You will find the poem very different indeed from anything else of the kind, and I think that you will like it. But without knowing the story that I told you, you could

not understand it, and it illustrates better than any other poem what that story signifies for the Greek mind. You must remember that it is the nightingale who speaks to the swallow.

Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair, swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
But I, fulfill'd of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,
How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet?
For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget and death remember,
Till thou remember and I forget.

We have to recollect the relationship between Procne and Philomela. The swallow is Procne. The nightingale reproaches her sister because, being a bird, she delights in the

spring and would fly south. She herself, a nightingale, will not fly south. Nor will she sing in the light, the sun, nor will she have any gladness, but will complain forever—not only because of the wrong that was done to her, but because of the killing of Itylus, the sister's son. Oh, how can that sister forget—even though a thousand summers are past! She, Philomela, will not forget, until such time as death itself shall become the same thing as remembrance, and life itself the same thing as oblivion. That is to say never! never!

The opening lines of several of the stanzas are almost exact copies from an ancient Greek song, with some artistic modifications. We know that Greek children used to sing every year a little song when they saw the swallows come with the fine weather, and in that song the swallow was addressed as "our sister swallow." The word "tawny" in the fifth line of the third stanza—so beautifully used—is suggested also by the Greek term for brown. Tawny is a glowing reddish or yellowish brown.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?
Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring:
But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover?

O, swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember
And over my head the waves have met.
But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow,
Could I forget or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flower-like face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow.
The voice of the child's blood crying yet,
Who hath remembered me? Who hath forgotten?
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

The reference to the crying of the child reminds us of another story. For it is said that the gods took pity on the little boy and he returned as a wood-pigeon,—I think the bird we call in this country *Yamabato*,—and that the mournful cry of this bird is the voice of the boy, still asking, "Has everybody forgotten me? Does nobody remember?"

I can not speak to you about the reason why the form of this poem is greatly praised by the highest critics; that would take too long, and perhaps would not be interesting. But for musical flow and emotional force, you can see that it is a very great poem. And after what we have been reading, you can understand why the Greeks did not like the singing of the nightingale. They thought it was too sad, and that it was not good fortune to listen to it. How curiously modern poets have changed in this respect! To all European poets to-day, not less than to the poets of Persia and Arabia, the singing of the nightingale is an ecstasy, the very paradise of pleasure in sound. We recognise the sadness in it, but it is pleasant to us. Not so to the Greeks—and perhaps they were right. But a modern poet, contemporary with Swinburne, seems to have felt very much like the Greeks in regard to the melancholy side of the sound,—Matthew Arnold. One of his best short poems is entitled "Philomela."

Hark! ah, the Nightingale!
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark—what pain!

O Wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
And its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet tranquil Thames,
And moonshine and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb Sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor Fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest!
Eternal Passion!
Eternal Pain!

Cephissus was the name of a river in Attica. It was there that the sisters originally lived. You can see that Matthew Arnold does not follow exactly the same Greek story that Swinburne does—for in this poem it is not Procne but Philomela who avenges. Swinburne takes the other legend, not only in his "Itylus" but also in the splendid opening of the chorus in "Atalanta":

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

I need not attempt to explain now to you the allusion to Itylus, the Thracian ships or the tongueless vigil. But you will see that Swinburne takes the other version of the tale. Either course is quite justified by precedent, and when such great poets and Greek scholars disagree, it is not for us to decide which course is best. I suppose the best way to think about it is to remember that everybody ought to take that view or version of a legend which is best suited to his particular genius.

You can now easily understand why Wordsworth did not like the singing of the nightingale very much; his cold, quiet, thoughtful mind disliked passionate things, even the passionate expression in the sound of a bird's voice. He preferred, he said, the voice of the dove to the nightingale. Perhaps several of us here present would agree with him in that. But I am not able to understand why Wordsworth should think the cooing of a dove more cheerful than the sobbing melody of the nightingale. There is nothing sweeter than the sound of the cooing of certain doves, but surely it is both sad and sorrowful. However, Wordsworth may also have been prejudiced against the nightingale by the horror of the Greek story. This is what he has written about it:

O nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart":—
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;

A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all thee loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
. . . . . .
He did not cease; but cooed and cooed,
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee:
That was the song—the song for me!

The allusion in the fifth and sixth lines, to the god of wine, implies that a nightingale sings as if he were drunk. You know that the word "Valentine" means a love letter or love message. Certainly Wordsworth has no esthetic feeling in certain directions; and it does not at all increase our very proper estimate of him to find him insensible to the charm of the nightingale's song. Yet he is quite right in praising the coo of the dove; for there is nothing more delicious in nature than

The moan of doves in immemorial elms.

Now it is not surprising to find other English poets almost like Wordsworth in his indifference to the nightingale. Coleridge has two poems about the nightingale; and neither of them is worth quoting. The first is only to the effect that he thinks the voice of his wife much sweeter than the voice of a nightingale; and the other is a description of moonlight walks in a garden where nightingales sing, but there is very little about the singing, and a great deal about the maiden with whom the poet was walking. Shelley has a poem about a woodman and a nightingale, but it is an allegory. The nightingale signifies poetry, and the woodman is the vulgar practical man-of-the-world who hates poetry, and would like to suppress all poets. The wood-

man takes an axe and cuts down the tree on which the nightingale sings; and Shelley would have us believe that the unsentimental world would like to starve all poets to death. The poem is full of beauty indeed; but we need not quote more than a few stanzas from it, because it is really a little foreign to our subject. I shall speak only about the passages treating of the nightingale's peculiar music. These verses are beautiful:

> One nightingale in an interfluous wood
> Satiate the hungry dark with melody,
> And, as a vale is watered by a flood,
>
> Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
> Struggling with darkness—as a tuberose.
> Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie
>
> Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,
> The singing of that happy nightingale
> In this sweet forest, from the golden close
>
> Of evening till the star of dawn may fail,
> Was interfused upon the silentness.
> The folded roses and the violets pale
>
> Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss
> Of heaven with all its planets; the dull ear
> Of the night-cradled earth; the loneliness
>
> Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere
> And every flower and beam and cloud and wave,
> And every wind of the mute atmosphere,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Was awed into delight, and by the charm
> Girt as with an interminable zone,
> Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm
>
> Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion,
> Out of their dreams; harmony became love
> In every soul but one.

This is musical and very pretty, and makes us think about the skill of the poet who can use words so melodiously. But it does not make us think about the bird at all. The

substance of it is simply that the bird filled the night with music, as flowers fill the air with perfume,—and that everything listened to the magical notes and even the elements were stilled, and everybody's heart became loving except the heart of that detestable woodcutter. It is much better to turn to poets that give us something to think about on the subject of the nightingale. Let us take, for example, Robert Bridges—whom I might call the very last of the English classical poets, though he is still living. Robert Bridges is, like Swinburne and Arnold, a Greek scholar, and a great many of his poems are renderings of Greek myths, or dramatic compositions formed after a careful study of the Greek poets. Therefore we might expect him at least to make one allusion to the legend of Philomela. But he does not. Nevertheless he gives us something very beautiful and very sad:

Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
  Ye learn your song.
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
  Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
  A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
  For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
  As night is withdrawn,
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
  Welcome the dawn.

As I have said, he makes no allusion directly to the Greek story; nevertheless the poem can be fully understood only

by those who know that story. For the barren mountains and the dried-up-rivers will make them think of the Thracian country and the hills about Attica. This is worth paraphrasing; you will then see the beauty of it better.

First, the poet says to the nightingales,—"O nightingales, surely you must have come from some heavenly country to be able to sing like that! How beautiful must be the mountains of your native land, and how fruitful the valley, and how bright the rivers of the region in which you first learned to sing. Tell me where are those luminous, heavenly woods! O how I wish I could go to that place and wander among the celestial flowers, which never fade in that country of heaven and of eternal summer." But the nightingales answer: "No, you are much mistaken! We do not come from heaven; and the mountains of our country are mountains where no trees grow, and the rivers of our country are dried up forever. And the song that we sing is a song of longing and of pain—a pain of remembrance that haunts our dreams, an agony of heart. And the dim things that we see in memory and long for, the deep hopes that we once had and which we are forbidden now to entertain,—these are things which all our art of sorrowful music never can alter. Only at night we sing. Then all alone we try to tell our dark night-secret to the ears of men; and men are delighted by the sound of our sorrow, only because they do not understand. And then, when the night passes away from the fragrant blossoming meadows and the budding branches of the spring-blooming trees, we sleep. We sleep—but the other innumerable birds hail the god of day with their morning songs while we begin to dream."

I forgot to tell you that Dr. Bridges is a musician, as well as a physician and poet. Wordsworth was not a musician, nor did he have much of what is called "an ear for music"; perhaps that is one reason why he did not care for the nightingale, because it really requires a musical ear to

appreciate the finer qualities of the song of that bird. Swinburne understood music; so did Keats, a little; so did Shelley to some degree. And Milton, who was an excellent musician, was also a lover of the nightingale. Here is a famous sonnet which he wrote about it:

O nightingale that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eve of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh;
As thou from ear to ear hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

From this poem by Milton we know that the song of the nightingale was considered lucky to hear in the seventeenth century, as well as before it; while it was considered a bad omen to hear the hooting of an owl. And Milton seems to have found much more pleasure than sadness in the bird's note.

Is it not curious to find Milton, the most scholarly of all poets, and perhaps the most musical of his generation, touching so lightly and tenderly on the subject of the nightingale? It reminds us of the way in which Milton looked at Shakespeare. He did not think of Shakespeare like the other poets of the time; he found him joyful and merry, and spoke of him as "warbling woodnotes wild." He called him "sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child," at a time when nobody else understood how great Shakespeare really was. But Milton did not see the great depth of Shakespeare; and perhaps, for the same reason, he did not feel certain profound qualities of sadness suggested by the music of the

bird. But the most perfect expression of these deeper feelings—feelings independent of the Greek story altogether—was years later, and then by Keats. Keats's poem, the "Ode to a Nightingale," is the greatest of all English nightingale poems, except the "Itylus" of Swinburne. But remember that it is altogether different and has nothing to do with "Itylus." It is only an attempt to express in perfect verse the particular emotions which the song of the nightingale aroused in the heart of the poet. After this passionate and beautiful poem, other poems about the nightingale will perhaps seem very pale. But I shall quote only one more—by Christina Rossetti, the greatest woman poet of her time. Compared with Keats's ode it is very simple, but it is pretty and, in its way, full of sweetness.

The sunrise wakes the lark to sing,
  The moonrise wakes the nightingale.
Come darkness, moonrise, everything
  That is so silent, sweet, and pale:
  Come, so ye wake the nightingale.

Make haste to mount, thou wistful moon,
  Make haste to wake the nightingale:
Let silence set the world in tune
  To hearken to that wordless tale
  Which warbles from the nightingale.

O herald skylark, stay thy flight
  One moment, for a nightingale
Floods us with sorrow and delight.
  To-morrow thou shalt hoist the sail;
  Leave us to-night the nightingale.

The appeal is being made to a skylark which has begun to sing a little too early, before it is quite yet dawn, and while the nightingale is still singing. That appeal is in the last stanza only. The first stanza represents the poet's longing during the day for the coming of the night and the nightingale; in the second stanza the night has come, and the moon

is asked to waken the nightingale; and in the third stanza the night is almost passed, and the skylark has begun to twitter, though the nightingale has not yet done. The whole thing is a pretty little song. No explanation in detail is necessary. But please remember that the phrase "set in tune," in the third line of the second stanza, is a musical term, signifying to prepare an instrument for the playing of music. Silence is personified as the musician, who is asked to prepare the world for the music of the bird. And in the fourth line of the last stanza the phrase "hoist the sail" means only to rise up into the sky as the bird does. Poets often use the word "sail" in speaking of the wings of the bird; thus Smart, in his "Song of David," says—

Strong the gier-eagle on his sail.

Next to the nightingale in importance—in English poetry at least—we find the cuckoo. As the rose, the violet and the lily, are chief subjects in English poetry, so are the nightingale, the cuckoo and the skylark. Of course the difference in merit of the cuckoo and the skylark is exceedingly great, the call of the cuckoo representing only the sweet and simple notes, while the singing of the skylark is a splendid and ecstatic warble. So we might suppose the poetry about the cuckoo to be simple, like the note of the bird, and the poetry about the skylark to be elaborate and wonderful. This is just what we do find. Yet the cuckoo must be ranked in poetry next to the nightingale, notwithstanding that little of the poetry about it is of really great character—like Shelley's "Ode to the Skylark," for example.

One reason is perhaps that English poetry about the cuckoo is older than anything of importance about the skylark. The earliest English poem about the cuckoo was written in the thirteenth century. The Norman Conquest was like a blow that stunned English literature, and the poets had nothing to say for more than a hundred years. After that long silence, the first new warble was the famous cuckoo

song. But I will not quote it to you, because it is written in early middle English, and is full of obsolete words. You can find it in the anthologies. When the next great poetical awakening came with Shakespeare, Shakespeare himself made a new cuckoo song. In the classical, or Augustine era, of English literature, a third cuckoo song was heard. Finally in the nineteenth century Wordsworth and others made poems about the bird. So you see that the English have been making poems on the cuckoo for about six hundred and fifty years. That is why we must rank its place next to the nightingale's.

But before telling you anything more about the poetry, I want to talk of an obsolete word, without any knowledge of which the next poem would not be understood. I mean the word "cuckold." It means a man who has been deceived by his wife—a man whose wife has been unfaithful to him. I suppose you know the European cuckoo is the most immoral of all birds in its habits. By immoral, I do not mean sexually immoral, but immoral in the widest possible sense. It is a wicked and fierce and cunning bird, apparently without natural affection of any strong kind. It makes no nest of its own, but lays its eggs in the nests of other birds, who hatch them. And the egg is usually laid in the nest of some small weak bird, so that as soon as the little cuckoo becomes strong, it is able to drive away or kill the young of the bird who hatched it. You might say that it was the adulterer, not the husband, who ought to have been called "cuckold." But the real meaning of the word was not a man who had acted like the cuckoo but a man who had been cuckooed, so to speak,—treated as honest birds are treated by a cuckoo. And now you will understand Shakespeare's "Spring Song."

When daisies pied and violets blue,
  And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
  Do paint the meadows with delight,

The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo! O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo! O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

There is nothing here to explain except some old fashioned words. "Pied" means of two or more different colours. "Lady-smocks," a quaint name for a certain wild flower, literally means a lady's shirt or undergarment. It is no longer used of women's clothing; but overshirts used by English workmen, while at their work, are still called smocks. "Pipe on oaten straws," means to make music with a little instrument called a "Pan's-pipe," made of straws of different length fitted together. Oat straws were preferred on account of their strength.

The most celebrated of all English poems about the cuckoo is that of Michael Bruce, who wrote about the middle of the eighteenth century; he was born in 1746, and died in 1767. It was from him that Wordsworth got his inspiration for a cuckoo-poem, and I think that Bruce is much better than Wordsworth in this single field. After having read him, Wordsworth's verses seem very pale in comparison—perhaps all the more so because both poems happen to be in the same simple quatrain-form.

TO THE CUCKOO

Hail, beauteous stranger of the wood!
Thou messenger of Spring!

Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome ring.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear:
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
Of birds among the bowers.

The schoolboy, wand'ring through the wood
To pull the flowers so gay,
Starts, thy curious voice to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fly'st thy vocal vale,
An annual guest, in other lands,
Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year!

. . . . . .

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.

Really the cuckoo is not a lovable bird; there is even a proverb, "ungrateful as a cuckoo." For the young cuckoo will dash out the eyes of the mother bird trying to feed it. It is a detestable bird; and it is, I believe, in many ways like the Japanese bird whose name is often incorrectly translated into English as "cuckoo." They may be ornithologically related; the relation is very remote. But the sound of the cuckoo's voice is very sweet and very penetrative; and

for that reason the bird has been praised in poetry from very ancient times. The first English song about the cuckoo is almost a song of caress; and that which we have just read is composed in an equally loving tone. Probably Shakespeare's song was suggested by some French poem, but even when speaking of the bird's song as ill-omened, he does so in so merry a way that we think only of the delight of spring. Wordsworth's poem may now be compared with that of Bruce.

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice,
O cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain

And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faëry place,
That is fit home for thee!

The stanzas appear weak by the side of Bruce's. But there is beauty in Wordsworth's to me; and his conception of the subject is quite different from Bruce's. To Bruce the cuckoo brought the thought of the joy of spring and the delight of being able to go from country to country, like the bird of passage, so as to live forever in one eternal round of spring. To Wordsworth, on the contrary, the cry of the cuckoo chiefly brings the delight of memory—memory of child days. He remembers how he used to try to find the cuckoo, when he heard it, and never could,—and so imagined it to be a ghostly thing. (It is really very hard to find or to see, for it is most skilful in concealing itself.) And so, whenever he hears the cuckoo, the boy-hearing comes back again and, with it, the delightful capacity to imagine the world as a kind of fairy land, peopled by ghosts and elves. Childhood is the real time of romance, when we prefer to believe the impossible rather than the possible, because the impossible appears so much more beautiful. There is better thinking in the Wordsworth poem than in Bruce's poem; but as to form and music, Bruce's stanzas are much the better.

I do not think that it would be worth while to quote to you any more poems about the cuckoo; for these are the most famous, and the rest do not rise to the great height of lyrical poetry. And I will not say anything covering the early symbolic poetry about the cuckoo, for that does not properly belong to our subject. Let us now read some poems—only the very best—about the skylark. After that we shall go to a very splendid subject,—the sea-gull.

English poetry about the lark begins almost as early,

though perhaps not quite so early, as English poetry upon the nightingale. Shakespeare was one of the first English poets to write a really memorable poem on the subject, though there were mentions of the lark's song long before his time. It is a noteworthy fact that Shakespeare's little song, which you will find in the play of "Cymbeline," is still sung, though composed more than three hundred years ago. It contained only a line or two about the lark; but it is so very famous that you ought to know it. Besides, it represents so well that southern French form of song called the *aubade* or "morning song," that we may quote it for another reason. I think you know that love songs addressed to some lady and intended to be sung at night were called serenades;—the *aubade* or morning song, was a love song with which the lady was supposed to be awakened, after having been pleasantly lulled to sleep by the serenade. This is Shakespeare's morning song:

Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies:
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With everything that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise;
Arise, arise!

You know that Phoebus is another name for the sun-god, more commonly called by the Greeks Helios. He was accustomed to drive his chariot across the sky every day, drawn by a team of four steeds abreast; and he was said to give them drink in the morning at the western spring. But Shakespeare prettily represents him as giving them the morning dew to drink, which lies upon the chalice-shaped flowers.

This joyous mention of the lark introduces a long succession of modern English poems about the bird. But we

can quote only some of the best; and we may dismiss the remainder with a few general observations. Most of the really good English poems about the lark are either philosophical or symbolical or both. Why, I am scarcely able to imagine; but I fancy the reason to be that the great poems on the subject date from the close of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century, when one or two great singers having set the example of treating the subject reflectively, all the others followed suit. And the tendency strengthens with each generation. The earliest great poem was probably Shelley's—though Wordsworth may have made one skylark poem a little sooner. The last great poem on the subject—philosophically the greatest of all and very much the largest in every way—is George Meredith's, entitled "The Lark Ascending." This is the chief thing to bear in mind about English lark poetry; it is nearly all very serious poetry—poetry of thought even more than poetry of feeling. We may take one of Wordsworth's poems first. There are two; but I will quote only the last one entirely. Of the other an extract or two will suffice.

Ethereal minstrel! Pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler! that love-prompted strain
('Twixt thee and thine a never-fading bond)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet mightest thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy Spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine!
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony with instinct more divine;

Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

This was written in the full maturity of Wordsworth's powers, while his other efforts in the same direction do him less credit. This is really a grand poem, short as it is—though the last thought seems to us a little weak. But even Tennyson could not have surpassed lines such as the first and second of the third stanza, or the third and the fourth of the first stanza. Wordsworth wrote that poem in 1825; and Shelley had written his famous "Ode to the Skylark" in 1820. But Wordsworth's first poem on the skylark was written in 1805 and we may suppose when Shelley's splendid lyric appeared Wordsworth felt ashamed of his first work and tried to do better. He does not even in 1825 come up to Shelley—for Shelley himself was a kind of skylark; but he did very well indeed. Even in his first poem there were some good lines. I quote the following from the verses of 1805:

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

Now I will not quote to you Shelley's Ode—partly because I quoted it once before to this very class in a lecture on Shelley—but chiefly because it is in many of the school-text books; and I think that most of you have read it. But I may tell you that it is worth while to notice the different way in which Shelley felt the delight of the skylark's song. His poem is really very great because he has divined with a poet's instinct that such singing is possible only to a light heart that is very glad and very sincere. And he says that if a man could only get rid of his bad passions—hatred and pride and fear—there would be poetry in the world worthy

to compare with the song of the skylark. But as long as men are selfish and bad, the skylark's will always be the best poetry—for he is indeed a "scorner of the ground." That is to say, he cares nothing for what men trouble themselves about incessantly. Even though I do not quote the poem here, let me beg of you to read it again when you have time. Then by comparing it with other poems which I am quoting, you will be able to see what a divine thing it is.

And now I am going to quote the greatest English philosophical poem about the skylark—not all of it, for it is too long, and obscure in parts—but the best of it. It is called "The Lark Ascending," and it is to be found in that volume of George Meredith's poems entitled "Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth."

> He rises and begins to round,
> He drops the silver chain of sound,
> Of many links without a break,
> In chirrup, whistle, slur, and shake,
> All intervolved and spreading wide,
> Like water-dimples down a tide
> Where ripple ripple overcurls
> And eddy into eddy whirls;
> A crest of hurried notes that run
> So brief they scarce are more than one,
> Yet changingly the trills repeat
> And linger ringing while they fleet.

This is a description of the quality of the lark's song; and it far surpasses in musical accuracy anything of the kind ever attempted by any other English poet. Meredith has no superior in finding words and similes to express complex sensations; and only Browning ever rivalled him in this. His fault is, like Browning's, obscurity.

So much for the notes of the lark; the poet goes on to speak of how they reached the brain through the ear,—and reached the soul through the brain. For the ear, he says, is only a handmaid, a servant; the real hearer of beautiful things is

not the ear, but the mind. And to the mind what is the song of the skylark?

> It seems the very jet of earth
> At sight of sun, her music's mirth,
> As up he wings the spiral stair,
> A song of light, and pierces air
> With fountain ardour, fountain play,
> To reach the shining tops of day,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Unthinking save that he may give
> His voice the outlet, there to live
> Renewed in endless notes of glee,
> So thirsty of his voice is he.

That song is like a something springing out of the very earth itself,—a gush of life towards the joyful sight of the sun,—the very laughter and music of the sun of the world. So it seems as the lark keeps circling up—circling and circling, like a spirit mounting some spiral stair to heaven. That song is very deep, like a song of light, rising like a luminous fountain, strongly playing, strongly aspiring to reach the very top of day. And all the while the bird is not thinking about doing anything wonderful; he is only expressing the joy of his little heart; he does not want anything in the world except the pleasure of his own singing—except the delight of expressing his delight. As a thirsty man needs water, so only this bird needs song.

Then follows another description of the music, still finer than before, but rather difficult, and we need not quote it all—only this:

> Wider over many heads
> The starry voice ascending spreads,
> Awakening, as it waxes thin,
> The best in us to him akin;
> And every face to watch him raised
> Puts on the light of children praised,
> So rich our human pleasure ripes

When sweetness on sincereness pipes,
Though naught be promised from the seas.

Many people stop work in the fields and look up to watch the lark rising; and his starry voice seems to spread wider as it becomes fainter in ascension. And that high faint sweet sound somehow awakens in the heart of each person the best quality in the heart—the best emotions in us, which are indeed nothing to be compared with the joy of the lark. Whatever in us aspires to heaven is of kinship with the soul of the lark. Look at the faces of the people watching the bird; all those faces are smiling happily just as children smile when we praise them. But why does the song of the bird make us smile? Simply because we are always happy when we see or hear what is sincere mingling with what is really sweet. The sweetness alone, whether of form or sound, is of little consequence, if it be not made by something which is warm and true. And when we find sincerity and sweetness together, then we become so happy that we do not want anything more—happy like children when they are looking at some wonderful thing. It would not make children any more happy in that moment to offer them a present from beyond the seas. And you do not want anything more from sincerity and sweetness than the pleasure of seeing and hearing them.

But what is the quality of this sweetness and this sincerity in the song of the lark? In other words, what does the song mean? There is nothing mystical about George Meredith when he comes to the study of natural facts. He tells us very plainly that the delight of the song, even while appealing to the mind and to the higher qualities of mind, rests altogether in the *naturalness* of it.

For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup,
And he the wine which overflows

To lift us with him as he goes:
The woods and brooks, the sheep and kine,
He is, the hills, the human line,
The meadows green, the fallows brown,
The dreams of labour in the town;
He sings the sap, the quickened veins;
The wedding song of sun and rains
He is, the dance of children, thanks
Of sowers, shout of primrose-banks,
And eye of violets while they breathe;
All these the circling song will wreathe,
And you shall hear the herb and tree,
The better health of men shall see,
Shall feel celestially, as long
As you crave nothing save the song.

For while the lark sings and fills all the sky with his singing, what he is really teaching us is a proper love of earth and of nature. This beautiful world in which we live has been too often called a "Vale of Tears." But it is not a Vale of Tears to the skylark—not at all! To him it is like a great cup of gold, as the sun fills it; and his song is the wine of the cup, which, if we drink, we shall be able to rise heavenward with the singer. The name of that wine is Joy; and it is our duty to be joyful. That lark is in itself an epitome of joy to the world; and his song is the song of the joy of all things—woods and rivers—sheep and cattle—the mountains—the human race—the green valley—the untilled fields—even the dreams of the men who labour in the great city, and long while they labour for the blue sky and the smell of fresh grass. What does he sing of? He sings of spring—the rising of the new sap in the trees—the quickening of blood in the hearts both of men and of birds; he sings the wedding song of sun and rain—the sun and rain of Springtime. Nay! he is himself the song, and he is also the dance of happy children—the happiness of prosperous farmers—the beautiful colour of banks of primrose flowers—the colour so bright that it seems to shout when you look at it;—and he is also the eye of the perfume-

breathing violet. All those things you will find repeated and mingled together in his singing. Listen to it properly, and you will hear the grass speak and the trees speak,—and you will see the better side of the hearts of men,—and you will even feel as if you were in heaven, provided that you be contented to hear, and do not allow your mind to be disturbed by a foolish desire for something else.

At this point the poet reminds us of one astounding difference between the charm of a bird's song and the charm of any human utterance. The greatest poet, the greatest musician can only touch the hearts of a chosen few, but the bird can delight every ear that listens to its song of joy. The highest possible form of all human poetry would be that which is at once simple enough to be understood by everybody and sweet enough to touch everybody; that is to say, it would be like the song of the skylark. This is the teaching also of Tolstoi, about the supreme expression of the highest art; but Meredith wrote this poem long before the Russian writer had composed his famous essay.

Was never voice of ours could say
Our inmost in the sweetest way,
Like yonder voice aloft, and link
All hearers in the song they drink.
Our wisdom speaks from failing blood,
Our passion is too full in flood,
We want the key of his wild note,
Of truthful in a tuneful throat,
The song seraphically free
Of taint of personality,
So pure that it salutes the suns
The voice of one for millions,
In whom the millions rejoice
For giving their one spirit voice.

You will see the beauty of this better in the paraphrase, for the verses are suggestive rather than didactic:

"There never was a human voice in our world which could speak the innermost thoughts of the human heart in the most

beautiful way possible—as that bird speaks all its heart in the sweetest possible manner. And even if there were such a human voice, it would not be able to speak to all human hearts alike—as that bird can. For wisdom comes to us, poor human beings, only when we are getting old—when our blood is growing chill, and when we do not care to sing. On the other hand, in the time of our youth, when we want to sing—want to write beautiful poetry—then we are too impulsive, too passionate, too selfish, to sing a perfect song. We think too much about ourselves; and that makes us insincere. But there is no insincerity in that bird. If we could but utter the truth of our hearts as he can! There is no selfishness in the song of that bird, nothing of individual desire; such a song is indeed like the song of a seraph, highest of angels—so pure is it, so untouched by the least personal quality. Only such an impersonal song is suited to express the gratitude of all life to that great Giver of Life, the sun. And that is just what the song does express—one voice speaking for millions of creatures,—and no one of all those millions feeling in the least envious of the singer, but all, on the contrary, loving him for uttering their joy of heart so well."

Now comes, at the close of the poem, the beautiful suggestion that, although we have no human voices so pure and sweet as the voice of the skylark—that is to say, no human poet capable of composing a poem as sincere and as sweet as its song—nevertheless we have at least among us skylark souls:

> Yet men have we whom we revere,
> Now names, and men still housing here,
> Whose lives, by many a battle-dint
> Defaced, and grinding wheels on flint,
> Yield substance, though they sing not, sweet
> For song our highest heaven to greet:
> Whom heavenly singing gives us new,
> Enspheres them brilliant in our blue,
> From firmest base to farthest leap,
> Because their love of Earth is deep,

And they are warriors in accord
With life to serve, and pass reward,
So touching purest and so heard
In the brain's reflex of yon bird:
Wherefore their soul in me, or mine,
Through self-forgetfulness divine,
In them, that song aloft maintains,
To fill the sky and thrill the plains
With showerings drawn from human stores,
As he to silence nearer soars,
Extends the world at wings and dome,
More spacious making more our home
Till lost on his aërial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings.

This is not only difficult poetry to read; it is difficult even to divide into sentences—just as obscure as anything of Browning, but full of beautiful suggestions. I think this is the meaning—but I am not quite sure about some lines:

"Nevertheless we have men in this world,—some who are dead, and some who are still alive—men whom we reverence greatly, and who may be called our human skylarks. Perhaps they do not sing themselves; but their lives, although very unhappy, yield us material for song worthy to compare with the skylark's song, and worthy of being heard in the highest heaven. And about some of these men great poems have been written; and the names of them remain shining forever, like stars in the arc of heaven. Why are they beloved and famous? Because they were, or are, great lovers of life and of humanity, and therefore in the eternal struggle they are soldiers whose acts are in accord with the eternal purpose. They performed, or perform, their duty without ever thinking about reward. And their unselfishness enabled them to rise to the highest and purest things—so that when we hear of them, their very names sound in our ears as sweet as the song of a skylark. The spirit of those men, whether in me or in those whom I love, still lives because of their divine unselfishness, and keeps within me a strength of inspiration, sweet as the song of a skylark. But

the song of those human souls is of human things; the great poet, singing of human things, resembles the lark in this,—that the world grows larger to him as he nears death, just as to the lark the world seems to be widened and the sky to heighten, the more he ascends towards the heights where all is silence. The poet, thus growing wiser, makes the world appear larger and better to us, through his understanding of it; and when he dies, we still hear his voice and imagine that we can feel the sweetness of his presence. Even so we listen to a skylark singing, until he aspires up out of sight—until he is lost in the great light, and we can not see him any more. Even then we still imagine that we can hear him sing, after he has really passed out of hearing."

The next bird most worthy to rank after the skylark in the gallery of poetry, is the sea-gull. You have observed, I think, that the poems about the skylark all tell us about the sense of joy which the bird's song gives. The sea-gull gives us the sensation also of joy, but of a very different kind of joy—the joy of perfect freedom. The joy of the lark is in its singing, the joy of the sea-gull is in its wings. No poet could praise the cry of the sea-gull—not at least of an English sea-gull; for the note is very harsh and unpleasant. I believe in Japan the cry of the gull is considered a melancholy sound. Some kinds of gulls utter cries much like the cry of a cat, and they are not inexpressively called by the name of "mews."

You might ask, why should the sea-gull be considered as a type of freedom in preference to the eagle or some other bird of prey? The eagle and the hawk and many kinds of vultures are indeed types of freedom of a certain kind; but they are not birds which revel in storms and follow in the wake of tempests. I am not speaking of the sea-eagle, nor of the albatross, nor of the frigate-bird; these indeed revel in the tempest quite as boldly as the sea-gull, or even more so. But they are much less familiar birds—poets do not so often have the chance of seeing them. Neither do poets

catch sight of that most wonderful little creature which sailors call the "stormy petrel" or "Mother Carey's chicken," —a tiny creature which can be seen dancing over the waves in time of great storm, hundreds of miles away from land. But sea-gulls can be seen everywhere, and the freedom of the bird to fly in the face of the storm, to dive into rising surge, to perpetually play with death and yet remain unharmed, could not but impress any poetical imagination. Other birds need at least a home, a mountain-top or tree, a hollow of some sort in which to dwell. But the sea-gull appears to be independent of all wants, except air and sea. The best poem in Engish on this bird is Swinburne's "To a Seamew." It is too long for complete quotation; I can give extracts only. But it is not too much to say that Shelley himself could not have equalled this; indeed, he is the only poet in English literature who ever accomplished anything to compare with it.

When I had wings, my brother,
  Such wings were mine as thine;
Such life my heart remembers
In all as wild Septembers
As this when life seems other,
  Though sweet, than once was mine;
When I had wings, my brother,
  Such wings were mine as thine.

Such life as thrills and quickens
  The silence of thy flight,
Or fills thy note's elation
With lordlier exultation
Than man's, whose faint heart sickens
  With hopes and fears that blight
Such life as thrills and quickens
  The silence of thy flight.

Thy cry from windward clanging
  Makes all the cliffs rejoice;
Though storm clothe seas with sorrow,
Thy call salutes the morrow;

While shades of pain seem hanging
  Round earth's most rapturous voice,
Thy cry from windward clanging
  Makes all the cliffs rejoice.

We, sons and sires of seamen,
  Whose home is all the sea,
What place man may, we claim it;
But thine—whose thought may name it?
Free birds live higher than freemen,
  And gladlier ye than we—
We, sons and sires of seamen,
  Whose home is all the sea.

In reading this poem, one can scarcely forget that the poet is a descendant of a great seaman, and that Admiral Swinburne was one of his immediate ancestors. I do not mean to say that he wishes the reader to know this—not at all; but the fact is worth remembering. The beginning of the poem is a sort of reminiscence of former lives, however—not of the time when the soul of the poet was in the body of the seaman, but in the body of a sea-bird; and the poet continues—

"We Englishmen are the descendants and also the fathers of seamen; and we are the sons and the fathers of men who called the whole sea their home. Indeed, whatever right poor human beings can have to call the sea their home, we Englishmen may justly claim that right. But our right to call the sea our home—what is it compared with yours? What man can even imagine the whole extent of your claim to that privilege? We call ourselves free Englishmen; we are proud of being freemen; but the free bird is higher than the freeman, and more joyful is the bird's life."

There are times indeed when even Englishmen might be inclined to doubt their right to the sea—times of storm in which no ship can live. But in such a time the sea-gull is especially joyful; for the storm brings wreck and death and plenty of good things to eat—though Swinburne does not exactly say so.

The sea and the storm-wind can terrify man; no matter how brave we may be, there are moments when, face to face with death, we feel affrighted. The bravest soldier even knows what it is to be afraid,—fear being a natural emotion which no amount of reason can extinguish. Every man, except a fool of the most foolish kind, is subject to fear,—we call "brave" the man who, in spite of this natural emotion, acts in the face of danger just as if there were no danger at all. He is brave by force of will. But in the face of storm, when man needs all his bravery, the sea-gull only seems to rejoice.

For you the storm sounds only
  More notes of more delight
Than earth's in sunniest weather:
When heaven and sea together
Join strengths against the lonely
  Lost bark borne down by night,
For you the storm sounds only
  More notes of more delight.

With wider wing, and louder
  Long clarion-call of joy,
Thy tribe salutes the terror
Of darkness, wild as error,
But sure as truth, and prouder
  Than waves with man for toy;
With wider wing, and louder
  Long clarion-call of joy.

The wave's wing spreads and flutters,
  The wave's heart swells and breaks;
One moment's passion thrills it,
One pulse of power fulfils it
And ends the pride it utters
  When, loud with life that quakes,
The wave's wing spreads and flutters,
  The wave's heart swells and breaks.

But thine and thou, my brother,
  Keep heart and wing more high
Than aught may scare or sunder;

The waves whose throats are thunder
Fall hurtling each on other,
  And triumph as they die;
But thine and thou, my brother,
  Keep heart and wing more high.

More high than wrath or anguish,
  More strong than pride or fear,
Than sense or soul half hidden
In thee, for us forbidden,
Bids thee nor change nor languish,
  But live thy life as here,
More high than wrath or anguish
  More strong than pride or fear.

The poet makes the comparison between the conception of life, as man has it, and the sense of life the bird has; man is less obedient to the eternal law than is the bird. And therefore man is weaker than the bird, and may take from it a great example, a great moral lesson. What is life but a great sea—the sea of birth and death—and we but as birds upon the shores of it? We always complain if the weather be stormy. We want perpetual rest, everlasting summer weather, eternal calm. That is why we are so unhappy in this world; we want the impossible, something contrary to the laws of the universe. The sea can not be eternally calm, —for that were death; life is a sea that must be in perpetual agitation, must be purified by storm. Very different is the soul of the sea-bird; it is most happy when the storm comes.

We are fallen, even we, whose passion
  On earth is nearest thine;
Who sing, and cease from flying;
Who live, and dream of dying:
Grey time, in time's grey fashion,
  Bids wingless creatures pine:
We are fallen, even we, whose passion
  On earth is nearest thine.

That is to say, "We, the poets, who of all men are nearest to the sea-birds in love of freedom, and joy of earth, and per-

ception of nature's laws,—even we the poets are half cowards. We are afraid to live. We sing, but soon get tired. We seek pleasure—but we are always thinking about death. Perhaps it is because we have no wings; and as we become old, we feel more and more our helplessness in the struggle with nature's forces. But to you, O sea-bird, the struggle is joy, the fight is only triumph."

The lark knows no such rapture,
  Such joy no nightingale,
As sways the songless measure
Wherein thy wings take pleasure:
Thy love may no man capture,
  Thy pride may no man quail;
The lark knows no such rapture,
  Such joy no nightingale.

And we, whom dreams embolden,
  We can but creep and sing
And watch through heaven's waste hollow
  The flight no sight may follow
To the utter bourne beholden
  Of none that lack thy wing:
And we, whom dreams embolden,
  We can but creep and sing.

Our dreams have wings that falter,
  Our hearts bear hopes that die;
For thee no dream could better
A life no fears may fetter,
A pride no care can alter,
  That wots not whence nor why.

. . . . . .

Ah, well were I for ever
  Wouldst thou change lives with me,
And take my song's wild honey,
And give me back thy sunny
Wide eyes that weary never,
  And wings that search the sea;
Ah, well were I for ever,
  Wouldst thou change lives with me.

This is a very noble poem—so fine, indeed, that it would be a pity to quote any other on the same subject. Indeed there is no other English poem about sea-birds even faintly comparable to it. I had better now turn to the subject of miscellaneous poems about birds—different kinds. Something about cranes (storks, if you like) ought to have a Japanese interest. Perhaps this is the prettiest, a little composition by Lord De Tabley (John Leicester Warren), who was a great poet:

THE PILGRIM CRANES

The pilgrim cranes are moving to their South,
The clouds are herded, pale and rolling slow.
One flower is withered in the warm wind's mouth,
Whereby the gentle waters always flow.

The cloud-fire wanes beyond the lighted trees,
The sudden glory leaves the mountain dome;
Sleep in the night, O anguish mine, and cease
To listen for a step that will not come.

It is especially the sight of these birds flying against the sky that has impressed western poets; but the mournful cry is also often referred to in verse. For instance, Longfellow, in describing the death of Balder, speaks of the cry announcing the death of the god as being—

Like the mournful cry
Of sunward sailing cranes.

Otherwise, however, the crane or stork figures little in poetry. It chiefly appears as a detail of the landscape,—a part of a description of nature, or of the emotion aroused by nature.

And this is the case with many other birds—even in the poems of Wordsworth. Wordsworth has poems on the thrush, the robin redbreast, the linnet, and the skylark,—besides the poems already quoted about the cuckoo and the nightingale. But I do not think that any of these are important enough to quote; they do not show Wordsworth at

his best, or else they are not intimately connected with our subject. The poem on the thrush is very beautiful; but I quoted it to you last year—it is about a country girl employed as a servant in London, who hears a thrush singing in a cage, and suddenly remembers her home in the country, where she heard the same bird singing in the time she was a little child. The poems about the linnet and the redbreast are not very good—they are prosaic. Also Wordsworth has a poem about an eagle which is not very good—though there is a notable moral in it. It is entitled "The Dunollie Eagle." While visiting Dunollie castle, Wordsworth saw an eagle in a cage and pitied it. One day it escaped; and he was very glad. But the bird had been in the cage for years, and it flew away and was frightened at its new freedom and came back again to slavery. So that little incident inspired Wordsworth to write his poem—which is really a poem about the evil consequences of slavery. As for eagle poetry, I think there is nothing much better than Tennyson's six lines:

> He clasps the crag with crooked hands.
> Close to the sun, in lonely lands,
> Ringed with the azure world, he stands.
>
> The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,
> He watches from his mountain walls,
> And like a thunderbolt he falls.

These lines on the eagle are greatly admired—and they ought to be. Nobody could have written them who had not studied a landscape from the top of some very high mount. When you stand upon such a height, and look about you, of course the world looks much larger than when you are below; but that is not all—it also looks blue. All the distances are beautifully blue, and the horizon enormously wide and enormously high. Then, if you look at the sea, you will observe that its waves only appear like tiny wrinkles which move very, very slowly, with a crawling

motion as of an insect. By standing upon the top of Fuji, for example, we may imagine imperfectly how the world looks to the eagle from the top of a peak. But, remember, we can only imagine it imperfectly; for no man, even with a good telescope, can see as an eagle sees. It has the extraordinary power of being able to change the shape of the lens in its eye at will,—so as to obtain the focus for any distance from a mile to ninety miles. From the top of Fuji, for example, you can hardly see a large tree in the plain below. But an eagle could see from ten times that height even a little mouse running along the ground. Still this poem is great, because it gives us the sensation of seeing from a height according to our human senses, though not according to the power of an eagle.

Longfellow has been a great poet of birds. He has a poem about herons—but that is a local legend; also a poem about the crossbill; also poems about various kinds of American as well as European birds. It is no use to quote these, for Longfellow is readily accessible, and he is not difficult to study. But I may mention something about the story of a crossbill. The crossbill is a bird whose beak is differently shaped from that of other birds, and it has a red spot on its breast. The lower bill and the upper do not touch throughout their length, but cross each other when closed, so that the beak looks crooked. There is a pretty Christian story to account for the shape. It is said that when Christ was dying on the cross, a little bird came and tried to pull out the nails which had been driven through his hands, and continued to pull until its beak was twisted and broken, and its breast covered with blood from the throat. So Christ blessed it, and said that all men who loved him should also love that bird in aftertime. This pretty story formed the subject of a Danish poem, and Longfellow made a good translation of it. But of all Longfellow's poems about birds, I think the best is that entitled "The Emperor's Bird's Nest." It is founded upon a story told about the Emperor

Charles V. He was by no means a lovable emperor; there was a great deal of cunning and cruelty in his character, and he showed no scruple at all in dealing with those whom he found in his way. He was a religious persecutor—the father of that still more cruel and superstitious Philip II of Spain; and both he and his son would have put the whole world under the rule of the infamous inquisition if they could have done so. Philip II indeed bankrupted Spain in trying to do that. But this terrible Charles had sometimes gleams of kindness in his nature,—kindness of a surprising kind. He ordered a man to be burned alive for heresy; but he could be kind to little birds. That is what the poem is about—and it is a pretty poem. First we have an account of the dreadful weather in Flanders, when Charles and his Spanish soldiers were making war; and the Spanish officers were in very bad humour because of the rains, and the condition of the country, which rendered military operations excessively difficult. They were besieging a town and they could not take it. Suddenly those officers observed that a swallow had her nest made on the top of the Emperor's tent. That was a very extraordinary thing —for it was the very last place in the world where a nest would have been safe:

Yes, it was a swallow's nest,
  Built of clay and hair of horses,
Mane, or tail, or dragoon's crest,
Found on hedgerows east and west,
  After skirmish of the forces.

Then an old Hidalgo said,
  As he twirled his grey moustachio,
"Sure this swallow overhead
Thinks the Emperor's tent a shed,
  And the Emperor but a Macho!"

The word "macho" in Spanish means a mule;—the Hidalgo suggests that the bird might have supposed the Emperor's tent a mule's stable. He did not think that the

Emperor was listening, but Charles overheard this reference to his obstinancy of character, and he looked up and saw the nest. But when he saw it he was pleased, and gave orders that nobody should annoy the bird.

"Let no hand the bird molest,"
  Said he solemnly, "nor hurt her!"
Adding then, by way of jest,
"Golondrina is my guest,
  'Tis the wife of some deserter!"

"Golondrina" in Spanish means a swallow. But soldiers who deserted used to be jokingly described as swallows. So the Emperor, by using the feminine of the word, made an excellent pun, suggesting that the wife of some one of his deserting soldiers had come to the camp in spirit to atone for the fault of her husband.

And when the camp was being removed and the men came to pull down the Emperor's tent and carry it away, the Emperor ordered the men to leave the tent standing there, for the sake of the swallow.

So unharmed and unafraid
  Sat the swallow still and brooded,
Till the constant cannonade
Through the walls a breach had made,
  And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,
  Struck its tents as if disbanding,
Only not the Emperor's tent,
For he ordered, ere he went,
  Very curtly, "Leave it standing!"

So it stood there all alone,
  Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,
Till the brood was fledged and flown,
Singing o'er those walls of stone
  Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

In many pictures—emblematic pictures—of Peace, I think you have seen birds represented building their nest in

the mouth of abandoned cannon; it is really a fact that birds do such things. In time of war also, once they know that nobody desires to hurt them, they will build their nest even where heavy batteries are firing. They seem to take life very philosophically indeed. Does not this story of the grim Charles V remind you of the story of Mahomet and his cat? Mahomet was very fond of cats; and one of his favourites happened to be sleeping beside him one day when the call to prayer sounded. Mahomet was about to rise, when he found the cat was lying upon a part of his dress, so that he could not get up without disturbing it—unless he did the thing which he is celebrated for doing. Rather than wake the cat he cut off that part of his robe on which the cat was sleeping, and then went to the house of prayer.

You will find other poems about birds in Longfellow for yourself without any trouble, but please do not forget to read his little romance in verse called "The Falcon of Ser Federigo." This is a version of the beautiful Italian story which Tennyson also treated in verse under the title of "The Falcon." But Tennyson treats the story dramatically, and Longfellow only turns it into a charming narrative, and exquisite as Tennyson's verse is, I think you would prefer Longfellow's poem. I need not quote from either of them; this would not particularly help the general subject of the lecture, for both are much too long to permit of adequate quotation, and there are no passages of such exceptional value as to justify the quotation of a few lines. So I shall only tell this old Italian story—old, I believe, as the time of Boccaccio. There was a gentleman who had a tame hawk or falcon, of which he was very fond—a bird so intelligent that it would do almost anything which he told it to do. In the neighbourhood where he lived there also lived a beautiful lady—a widow, whom he loved very much and wished to marry; but as she happened to be of superior rank, it was difficult for him to win her. She had a little boy of five or six years old; and one day, in company with this little

boy, she paid a visit to the owner of the falcon. The boy was very much astonished and delighted by the intelligence and beauty of the bird. Some time after he fell sick; and while sick he asked his mother to give him the falcon of Ser Federigo. The mother at once went alone to the house of Ser Federigo to ask for the bird. But, according to the rules of Italian courtesy, she could not make the request immediately upon arrival; it was necessary first to accept the hospitality of the house. Now the knight happened to have no good food in the castle at the time. He therefore secretly killed the falcon, and cooked it, and gave the fair lady a very nice dinner. After the dinner she ventured to ask him to let her have the hawk for the sick boy's sake. In great pain he answered that he could not. She imagined that his refusal was merely selfish—a proof that he did not really love her. And she was about to go away, very unhappy, when the knight, divining her thoughts, confessed to her that he had already killed the hawk for her sake, and that was the reason why he could not give it. On learning the truth, the lady herself loved him for his courtesy and tact and generosity; and the result was a happy marriage. Probably a score of poems as well as prose versions of the story have been inspired by the Italian original; and that Tennyson should find it a worthy subject in the later years of his life ought to be sufficient proof of its value.

I believe that these are the most noteworthy poems about the hawk or falcon, in English literature. But there are many old ballads and songs about hawks; and you will find several of them in the ordinary anthologies. I do not quote any of them because, as in the case of "The Gay Goshawk," the birds of these ballads are magical birds—hawks that tell stories and carry letters, and act so much like human beings that there is nothing of the bird left in their character. Speaking of Longfellow, I must, however, remind you of another American poet who wrote a very famous poem about a bird—perhaps the only poem by which he will be per-

manently remembered. Bryant's poem "To a Water-fowl" you will meet with even in school readers, and I believe, in all the anthologies especially compiled for children. The verse is really very fine and musical, the language pure and richly coloured. But there is nothing particularly thoughtful in the poem,—indeed, its subject, the homing instinct of the bird, is theologically accounted for, after the fashion of the eighteenth century. It is a good school poem, for very young children; and that is about all that need be said concerning it.

As for birds in general, I do not know of any more remarkable poem than Arnold's "Lines Written in Kensington Gardens." Kensington Gardens is the name of one of the great parks in London. I think you know that the Zoological garden and other famous institutions are situated in that neighbourhood. There are beautiful trees there and grass and flowers, and many birds. All about the garden is the roar of the city, like the sound of the sea; but within the gardens there is light and peace and blue air. The poem which I am going to quote, describes the thoughts of a man who listens to the singing of birds in this place,—in the heart of London.

In this lone, open glade I lie,
  Screened by deep boughs on either hand;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
  Those black-crown, red-boled pine-trees stand!

Birds here make song, each bird has his,
  Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is!
  How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come.

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
  To take his nurse his broken toy;
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
  Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
  What endless, active life is here!

What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!
An air-stirred forest, fresh and clear.

. . . . . .

In the huge world which roars hard by,
Be others happy if they can!
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan.

I, on men's impious uproar hurled,
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world
And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace for ever new!
When I who watch them am away,
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass!
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass,
The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That here abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and can not mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give!
Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.

The last stanza but one,—and the most beautiful in the poem, refers to that peace of mind and heart which pious moral wisdom gives, the peace that is obtained through self-control. Just as that part in the heart of noisy London contains within itself a peace like that of the country, so a brave man of good understanding, though obliged to work and suffer among men who do not think rightly or uprightly, may keep in his own heart a certain heavenly peace

and resignation and love for humanity. The words "before I have begun to live," really mean "before I have begun to live the higher moral life, which teaches us not to complain and never to hate." You might ask whether this is really a bird-poem—because birds are only mentioned three or four times in it. But originally this poem was entitled "On Hearing a Bird's Singing in Kensington Gardens"; and the whole composition appears to have been inspired as stated.

I believe that I have given you the cream, at least, of the English poetry about birds. But I need scarcely tell you that the subject is far from being exhausted. There are hosts of other poems about birds—not only English poems about English birds, but also English poems about foreign birds. They are not, however, of a high order, and we must leave the inferior orders alone for the present, or let them be sufficiently represented by a reference. Cowper's poem about the crow is not a second rate poem; but the kind is the humorous kind, and I quoted the poem for you last year. Thomson's poem contained lines about every kind of English bird—I refer especially to his descriptions of awakening life in "Spring"—and Thomson is a great poet. But he can not be justly represented here by a few lines, and it would be of small use to quote him by pages. Otherwise I doubt whether anything important has been overlooked.

I might mention, however, that some birds belong to literature in an emblematical way which might be worth some private study. The dove, for example, has long been the Christian emblem of the Holy Ghost—you may have remarked one beautiful reference to this in Rossetti's poem of "The Blessed Damozel." But I do not dwell on this matter, simply because it is most intimately related to Christian iconography, which is a subject for the specialist. Neither have I said much about the likening of angels to birds; or about the white wings given to angels in pictures and paintings. That also belongs to iconography. However, you

should at least remember the fact—otherwise you could scarcely appreciate the charming surprise of Browning's delightful address to the angel in the painting—"Thou Bird of God!"

In conclusion I think this much may be said: English poetry about birds represents a very large proportion of lyrical expression of the highest order. It is emotional or meditative poetry of the most complex kind at its best. Perhaps there is no other simple subject which poets have treated in a higher and more complex way.

CHAPTER XVI

POEMS ON NIGHT

THE MOON AND THE STARS

EARLY last term, one of my pupils asked me for a list of poems about the moon; and at that time I determined to give a lecture about moon-poetry as soon as possible. But I did not find the material quite so easily as I expected. Even now I must tell you that I have given up the idea of attempting a separate lecture about moon-poetry. The subject is, with western poets, too intimately related to the subject of Night for any separate treatment which could have much literary significance. So this lecture will be rather upon the subject of Night, generally speaking, than about the lights of heaven. But you will find the best moon poems scattered through it, and afterwards you can separate them if you wish. But I do not think that will be worth doing.

Compared with the multitude of Japanese and of Chinese poems about the moon, the number of good English poems on the same subject is rather small. Of course one could make an anthology of parts of poems about the moon—single lines, or fragments of two or three lines long. But the literary value of such little fragments would be chiefly a value of adjectives and verbs; in other words, a value depending upon form and upon choice of words, rather than upon thought and feeling. For English students such a collection of small fragments might have word-value; for you it would have scarcely any value at all—because to you the worth of western poetry must be in idea and in feeling, not in artistic word-carving.

So I shall quote complete poems only, and only those containing ideas of a striking character.

The subject of Night is necessarily the most sublime of all possible poetry; for the most sublime of all sights is the sight of the night sky. Let me be sure, to begin with, that you clearly understand the meaning of the word "sublime." It is often used by students with a very imperfect knowledge of its significance. The sublime in nature, in art, or in utterance is not the beautiful nor is it the great, nor is it the grand. It is much more than beautiful, than great, or than grand. It is that which gives the deepest and largest of all emotional feelings—a very deep pleasure and wonder, mingled with a sense of fear. Without the element of fear, there is no sense of the sublime. Many persons would prefer to use the word "awe"—not fear. But awe is fear—though this word is commonly applied to particular qualities or kinds of fear, such as religious fear or the fear of some tremendous power, like the power of the king. I prefer to use a word to which no special meanings are attached. Therefore I say fear. When you behold, whether in your mind only, or with your eyes, something so wonderful and so great and so beautiful that it makes you afraid to look at it and to think about it—that is an experience of the sublime. The sight of the sea in a great storm, or the sight of a tremendous range of mountains covered with eternal snow, may be called a sublime aspect. But how much more sublime is the sight of the sky at night, when there are no clouds, and all the stars appear sparklingly before you. A thousand years ago the night sky probably did not look so sublime to the eyes of man as it does to-day, because man then knew very little about the science of astronomy. But now through the acquisition of that science, we know that in looking at the starry sky we are looking into the infinite, and we know that each of those distant myriads of tiny points of light is really a far-off sun, probably surrounded by many worlds, more or less like our own. Then the thought of our

relation to the monstrous and endless universe fills us with that profound emotion which is called sublime. Indeed the sight of the night sky required a special word or term to describe; and the emotion that it gives us has been qualified by a particular psychological name. It is called Cosmic Emotion.

But even before men knew so much about the universe as every student in a middle school knows to-day, people wrote poems full of sublime feeling about the sky. I need not quote Biblical texts for various reasons—which I shall afterwards explain; I shall confine myself to modern poems. In all English literature I think that there is no poem about Night much finer as to thought and feeling than a poem with a Latin title written by William Habington in the first half of the seventeenth century—or to be more exact, between the years 1605 and 1645:

NOX NOCTI INDICAT SCIENTIAM

(Night unto night showeth knowledge)

When I survey the bright
  Celestial sphere
So rich with jewels hung, that night
Doth like an Ethiop bride appear;

My soul her wings doth spread,
  And heavenward flies,
The Almighty's mysteries to read
In the large volumes of the skies.

For the bright firmament
  Shoots forth no flame
So silent, but is eloquent
In speaking the Creator's name.

No unregarded star
  Contracts its light
Into so small a character,
Removed far from our human sight,

But if we steadfast look,
We shall discern
In it, as in some holy book,.
How man may heavenly knowledge learn.

It tells the Conqueror,
That far-stretched power
Which his proud dangers traffic for,
Is but the triumph of an hour.

That from the farthest North,
Some nation may
Yet undiscovered issue forth,
And o'er his new-got conquest sway.

Some nation yet shut in
With hills of ice,
May be let out to scourge his sin,
Till they shall equal him in vice.

And then they likewise shall
Their ruin have;
For as yourselves your Empires fall,
And every kingdom hath a grave.

Thus those celestial fires,
Though seeming mute,
The fallacy of our desires
And all the pride of life, confute.

For they have watched since first
The world had birth:
And found sin in itself accursed,
And nothing permanent on earth.

The most beautiful part of this fine poem consists in the last lines of the first stanza,—comparing the night, all sparkling with stars, to a beautiful black woman robed for her bridal. "Ethiop," spelt differently from the manner in which we would spell the word to-day (Ethiope) is a short form of the word Ethiopian, belonging to the country of Ethiopia. The Romans called that part of Africa, which we to-day call Abyssinia, by the name of Ethiopia, and the word Ethiopia gradually became in poetry a general name

for Africa. So the phrase "Ethiop bride" means simply an African bride, so far as the literal meaning goes. But there is another than the literal meaning; indeed, to appreciate the comparison you should know something of the old-fashioned idea of Africa, the artistic idea of an Ethiopian bride as painted by the old-fashioned painters. In many old paintings and drawings the Queen of Sheba, visiting Solomon, was represented as a beautiful black woman; and some traditions so spoke of her. The Quaker poet Whittier, in our own time, re-echoes this legend in his poem about King Solomon and the ants. There he speaks of her as—

> Comely, but black withal,
> To whom perchance belongs
> That wondrous Song of Songs.

There is at least some justification for the use of the word Ethiopian in describing dark beauty. In certain parts of what used to be called Ethiopia there are some fine black races, whose women have a well deserved reputation for beauty. And among many dark races it is the custom to wear much jewelry,—gold and silver. The Indian women to-day save their money, not by putting it in a bank, but by turning it into ankle-rings, armlets, nose rings, earrings, and other ornaments of gold and silver. The sight of a black woman thus decorated with glittering metal is certainly very picturesque, and might well suggest to a poet such a comparison as that of the poem which we have read.

I need not say much to you about the general thought of the composition, which needs little explanation. The sight of the night sky has given to the observer the sense of the impermanency of all earthly things. Those stars that he sees have been shining thus from before the beginning of the world; they have looked down upon all the changes that have taken place in the history of races and of empires. They remind us how fleeting are all things that we know.

But then, being a religious poet, he attempts to explain the decay of kingdoms and of empires as the result of human folly and sin; and he remembers old Biblical prophecies about the future coming of a mighty race from the North, to punish and destroy luxurious nations. This northern people, he thinks, will prevail, until they become morally corrupt themselves; and thereafter they too must be swept away. That is what the sky of the night taught the old-fashioned poet. It is interesting, in this connection, to remember the recent prediction of Spencer to the effect that the present European civilisation,—the industrial civilisation of the West,—will probably be destroyed by some ruder and more vigorous, but less civilised race.

Solemn prophecies are not inspired often in these days by the vision of the night sky. Most modern poets have become too wise to attempt prophecy; perhaps I may say too sceptical. But the sight of the sky must always continue to inspire deep emotion and awe; and we find that such feelings increase, rather than diminish, with wisdom. Here is a powerful and very recent poem, entitled "The Night Sky," by Charles G. D. Roberts:

O Deep of Heaven, 'tis thou alone art boundless,
'Tis thou alone our balance shall not weigh,
'Tis thou alone our fathom-line finds soundless,—
Whose infinite our finite must obey!
Through thy blue realms and down thy starry reaches
Thought voyages forth beyond thy furthest fire,
And homing from no sighted shoreline, teaches
Thee measureless as is the soul's desire.
O Deep of Heaven! no beam of Pleiad ranging
Eternity may bridge thy gulf of spheres!
The ceaseless hum that fills thy sleep unchanging
Is rain of the innumerable years.
Our worlds, our suns, our ages,—these but stream
Through thine abiding like a dateless dream.

The author of the above poem is a professor of English literature in a Canadian university; and he has certainly

made a fine effort. Here we have something a little in advance of the older religious poem which I quoted to you, —not in workmanship, but rather in thought—or, to put it still more exactly, in the quality of the emotion that the thought creates. The idea is simple, if you like; but the simplicity is of that infinite kind which swallows up all details. The comparison of the infinite night, in which the sparkling of suns is no more than a glimmer of phosphorescence, to an ocean without bottom and without shore, is perhaps simple; but it is the very largest comparison which the human mind is capable of making. Notice that the use of sea-terms in these lines—such as "soundless (unfathomable)," "shoreline," etc., is not only tremendously effective, but even awful. Awful only because our modern minds have been enlarged by astronomic knowledge. Truly the night, as we see it now, represents the real Sea of Birth and Death, in which universes appear and disappear like those strange lights that we see among the waves in summer nights. And the sound of this sea, the poet likens to the sound of the fleeting of millions of centuries. Time itself, and Name, and Form, and all that we take for reality, is nothing at all but the shadow of passing waves in that eternal night or sea of space surrounding our tiny world.

But the poet stops at this thought. It is only, again, the thought of impermanency, expressed in a larger, because more modern, way than in the first poem. It is grand, it is awful; but it is not consoling, nor pleasing—except as regards the pleasure of fear. There is a cosmic emotion still larger than this, which may be awakened by the sight of the night sky; and there is an English poet who expresses it. The consoling way to consider the awfulness of the universe is to remember, when thinking about it, that we ourselves are a part of it, that the same life which is in us thrills also in the furthest visible stars, to remember that, as parts of one immeasurable whole, we must not be afraid of that vastness. It is George Meredith who best teaches us this lesson in

verse, in his poem entitled "Meditation Under Stars." He begins by asking the right question—What is our relation to the stars?

> What links are ours with orbs that are
> So resolutely far:
> The solitary asks, and they
> Give radiance as from a shield:
> Still at the death of day,
> The seen, the unrevealed.

What relation have we with those orbs which remain so unmercifully, so frightfully far away from us? That is the question which every lonely thinker asks himself; but the stars do not answer it readily. They send their light to us, cold and bright, like the glittering of a shield—the shield of mystery, harder to pierce than adamant. Always, of clear evenings, after the sinking of the sun, we see them shining; but always the mystery of them remains exactly the same as before.

> Implacable they shine
> To us who would of Life obtain
> An answer for the life we strain,
> To nourish with one sign.
> Nor can imagination throw
> The penetrative shaft: we pass
> The breath of thought, who would divine
> If haply they may grow
> As Earth; have our desire to know;
> If life comes there to grain from grass,
> And flowers like ours of toil and pain;
> Has passion to beat bar,
> Win space from cleaving brain;
> The mystic link attain,
> Whereby star holds on star.

Without pity those stars seem to shine,—without pity for us who exhaust our strength and our knowledge in the desperate effort to obtain one little hint of the meaning of the mystery of life. They tell us nothing. Even our imagination can

not really help us to know the meaning of that life of stars. When we try merely to reason about the universe, we only waste our intellectual power—because the riddle is beyond the range of human thought. And yet we want to know whether those far-away suns may not some day become worlds like this world,—and whether there will be races in those other worlds anxious to know what we are anxious to know,—and whether life upon those worlds passes, or will pass, through the same evolution as it has passed in our world, and through the same forms of struggle and pain. We want to know also whether in those other worlds, that are, or that may become, passion must be controlled as it is here our duty to control it. Will the people of other worlds be obliged to obtain wisdom by conquering themselves; or will they be able to learn the tremendous secret of communicating between world and world? Will they be able to discover the secret relation between star and star?

It is no use, he tells us, merely to reason about these things. The stars will not answer human questions. We can understand our relation to the universe only by trust, by faith, by love:

> To deeper than this ball of sight
> Appeal the lustrous people of the night.
> Fronting yon shoreless, sown with fiery sails,
> It is our ravenous that quails,
> Fresh by its craven thirsts and fears distraught.
> The spirit leaps alight,
> Doubts not in them is he.

By "ball of sight" the poet means the human eye. He says that the stars, the bright people of the night, as he calls them, appeal to something deeper within us than our bodily eyes. Why are we afraid when we look at the shoreless infinite of the night sky? Why do we tremble in thought at the immensity of that ocean, with its sails of fire (constellations)? Merely because of our poor weak bodies. The sight of the universe frightens our bodies, reminding them

how weak and how ephemeral they are. The cowardly desires of our bodies for enjoyment, and the cowardly fear which our bodies have of death—that only makes us afraid. Our flesh is afraid, because it is perishable. Our fear of the infinite is a mere animal fear—therefore unworthy. But the spirit that is within us is not perishable; and a man whose spirit is enlightened is not afraid of the infinite; he is not afraid of the stars. When he looks up at the stars he feels sure that he belongs to them quite as much as he belongs to this world—he knows that his real soul is thrilling at once within his earthly body and also in the light of the most distant stars. This is another way of saying that the spirit of man itself is really infinite, being a part of the infinite life.

> So may we read, and little find them cold;
> Not frosty lamps illumining dead space,
> Not distant aliens, not senseless Powers.
> The fire is in them whereof we are born;
> The music of their motion may be ours.
> Spirit shall deem them beckoning Earth and voiced
> Sisterly to her, in her beams rejoiced.

That is to say: if we think of the universe as a part of ourselves and of ourselves as a part of the universe and the universal life,—then the stars will not seem to us either awful or cold. No more will we think of them as of far away strangers; nor will we think of them as merely representing masses of force or centres of gravitation. We shall remember that their light represents the very same light that is in ourselves. The poet says that we have been born of fire. I need scarcely tell you that this is scientifically quite true. All the life existing upon this earth, as well as the earth itself, originally came from the sun. The poet is only reminding us that all worlds are born in fire. And you know that they will all die in fire. But the principle of deepest life, that is older than any sun and will continue after millions of suns have passed away—the one eternal life is unchangeable; the stars and the universes are only passing

manifestations of it. And that unchangeable and eternal life is also ours. When we look at the far away stars, they should remind us of the fact that we are eternal, and that the light of them represents only a symbol of the universal life which is at once in us and in millions of suns. When we think in this way, observes the poet, how much more beautiful does the universe appear!

Half strange seems earth, and sweeter than her flowers.

And Meredith partly repeats the thought of Shelley, suggesting that the spirit of the universe is love. I believe that this is the deepest modern poem on the subject of Night. It has one literary defect; it is so obscure in passages that I can not attempt to quote the whole of it. Browning often has the same defect in the midst of otherwise beautiful work.

Further than this, cosmic emotion can not go in poetry. But after all, the subject is rather a heavy one for the class room; and I prefer to turn now to night poetry of a somewhat lighter kind. I may begin this departure by some quotations from Wordsworth. He has two pieces of poetry about night which may, and ought to, please you. The first is merely descriptive, but it is description in which Wordsworth has never been surpassed. It is called "A Night Piece." I shall not quote the whole, only the finest lines. The poet is representing a traveller walking along at night under a cloudy sky. The night is what we would call in Japan *oborodzukiyo*. But all at once the clouds are scattered; and the traveller stops to look up with delight at the sudden spectacle of the moon and stars:

He looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,

But they are silent;—still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

It is said that Tennyson was partly inspired by this poem when he wrote his famous "Passing of Arthur." You should understand what the poet here means to describe before you can properly appreciate the poem. The whole sky was at first covered with white clouds; but later on an open space appeared in the middle of the sky, just above the traveller's head. What is the effect of looking at a circular space of clear sky surrounded by white clouds? The optical effect is to make the vison of sky appear deeper than it does at any other time, very much deeper than if there were no clouds at all. Also the space of clear sky, thus ringed round with white clouds, looks blacker than it does at any other time, very much blacker than if there were no clouds; and stars and moon would consequently seem to glitter much more brightly than usual. So what Wordsworth is here describing for us is not the usual but the unusual; and he produces the glittering effect as well as the dark effect by the use of the very simplest words. And how admirably does he do it! Notice the adjectives used for the stars,—"small, and sharp, and bright"; what could be simpler, yet what could give the effect better to the imagination? "Sharp" is exactly a proper word; for even under the ordinary telescope the stars always remain only as points of light to the human eye. I need not explain any more, except to remind you that the word "drive" is used here in the sense of drifting, or blown,—as a ship before the wind. Then you will ask, "Is not this wrong?" How can the stars appear to drift in such a way? Only because of the motion of the clouds. The stars themselves are not

moving—at least not moving in such a way that a human eye could perceive their movement. But the drifting of the clouds before the wind actually makes the moon and stars appear to have a motion which they actually have not.

The poem is essentially descriptive. But Wordsworth scarcely ever confines himself to pure description; he is a meditative poet, and even here we have a little bit of reflection. The closing lines give us the emotional effect which the sight of a glorious night makes upon the poet's mind. These are really the most important lines of the composition. If you think a little about them, you will feel how true they are. The sight of a very beautiful night sky, when the winds are still, makes within us a particular feeling of pleasure impossible to describe better by any other term than "peaceful calm." A beautiful spring day, you all know, fills us with delight,—gives us a sense of gladness which we can not feel under a gloomy sky. If you ask some great physiologist to tell you the reason of the joy that we feel on a beautiful day, he will very probably reply: "It has been shown very clearly that the effect of sunshine is to stimulate circulation." That is to say, the sunlight makes our hearts beat more quickly. But a great psychologist would tell you that this can only be a partial explanation; that the experience of the race has also something to do with our pleasure on bright days; that we inherit something of the joy of past humanity in the sight of blue sky and pure air. At all events, here is the fact that the sight of a beautiful night sky certainly produces in our minds a great pleasure and peace; and this could not be explained by the effect of star light or moon light upon circulation!

The mere pleasure of such vision is seldom unaccompanied by reflection. A beautiful moon, a beautiful starry sky, suggest many thoughts and fancies,—sometimes philosophic, sometimes merely esthetic, sometimes melancholy. One of the most common thoughts in moon poetry is that of the moral simile afforded by the sight of clouds passing over

the moon. I need not remind you how often this thought has been expressed by Japanese poets,—and not in one form only, but in many. Perhaps you will be surprised to hear that our western poets chiefly regard this appearance, in their poems, as a simile of hope, rather than of impermanency or sadness. Here is an example from Coleridge;—and I shall presently offer you other examples. The poem is a sonnet, and is entitled "To the Autumnal Moon."

Mild splendor of the various-vested Night!
Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!
I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil;
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud
Behind the gathered blackness lost on high;
And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud
Thy placid lightning o'er the awakened sky.
Ah! such is Hope! as changeful and as fair!
Now dimly peering on the wistful sight;
Now hid behind the dragon-winged Despair;
But soon emerging in her radiant might
She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care
Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

First let us notice a few of the peculiar expressions in the poem. You must remember that night is personified; and that the term "various vested," signifying clad or dressed in many different kinds of dresses, has a double value—referring both to the personification, and to the natural fact that night appears to us in a great many different aspects. By the expression "wildly working vision" you may simply understand "dream." Night has often been termed poetically the mother of dreams; and the extraordinary and impossible element in our dreams is properly qualified in the poet's use of the adverb "wildly." In the fourth line please notice the word "fleecy"; it is very commonly used by western poets in speaking of light, white clouds, because their curly and imponderable appearance suggests that of a fleece of wool. Eastern poets have not

been, in old time at least, sufficiently familiar with the appearance of sheep's wool to make use of a like comparison. But I believe that they have often used an equally good simile, that of cotton or silk. In the last line of the poem, please observe that the natural fact is very exactly described. The meteor or shooting star is described as "kindling *in* its flight"—and you must understand the preposition "in" to have the value of "during." As a fact, small meteors are said to become incandescent at the moment of entering our atmosphere; they appear to take fire as they fly.

Before we take another fine example of the same sort from Wordsworth, I may as well offer you an example of pure description of night scenery—description without any meditation whatever, without any reflection or sentiment. Such poetry may have occasional value. Whether it has value or not will chiefly depend upon the quality of suggestiveness that may be in it. If poetry can make us think and feel, without itself actually expressing any definite thought or feeling, it is true poetry; and it may be even great poetry. This poem has no title.

The clouds have left the sky,
The wind hath left the sea,
The half-moon up on high
Shrinketh her face of dree.

She lightens on the comb
Of leaden waves, that roar
And thrust their hurry foam
Up on the dusky shore.

Behind the western bars
The shrouded day retreats,
And unperceived the stars
Steal to their sovran seats.

And whiter grows the foam,
The small moon lightens more;
And as I turn me home,
My shadow walks before.

This poem, which is by Robert Bridges, forms one of those vivid appeals to memory which only a master poet can make. In the first stanza there is nothing particular to notice except the use of the old obsolete word "dree," signifying sadness or sorrow. It is a still night, with a young moon in the sky; and a heavy surf is rolling in, slowly. Notice the use of the word "comb" in the second stanza. You must have observed, at certain times, the resemblance of the lines on the sides of the moving wave to the lines in combed hair. Sailors often speak of waves as "combing," when the foam on the top of the crests is so even, and the lines of the curve below so regular, as to make one think of wool being passed through a comb. A more artistic though very simple word in the same stanza is "leaden," used to convey the grey metallic aspect of waves under moonlight. Though the waves themselves move slowly, the foam is not slow; it runs up the beach very fast after the fall of the wave; and this the poet suggests excellently by the use of two words, "thrust" and "hurry." Watch slow waves breaking, and you will see how true these words are of bursting foam. It moves as if it had been given a sudden thrust or push after falling, and then runs as if in a great hurry. There is nothing more to notice or explain; the rest of the poem speaks for itself. But of course the full impression comes only with the last line, describing the shadow of the man walking home in front of him. After you have read that, the memory of many a night at sea must return to you. That is, if you have often been at the seashore, you can get the whole sensation of the night in the little picture; the appearance of the new moon, and the first sparkling of the stars, the colour and the form, as well as the sounds of the great waves —lastly, the cool sensation of the homeward walk, and that sense of loneliness which impels a man to find interest even in the movements of his own shadow.

But poetry like this, good as it is, depends very much for its effect upon the experience of the reader. That is true

of all suggestive poetry. If you have not had the experience, then you can not feel the poem. And the experience of the seacoast at night is not altogether what we might call a common experience. Thousands of us do not go to the sea. In America, for example, there are probably several millions of people who never have seen and probably never will see the sea. But there is nobody, with eyes, who has not seen the moon, and who can not feel the poetry of a Wordsworth or a Coleridge writing about the moon. Here is an example of the use by Wordsworth of the very same thought that inspired Coleridge, with some original variations:

Lo! where the Moon along the sky
Sails with her happy destiny;
Oft is she hid from mortal eye
  Or dimly seen,
But when the clouds asunder fly,
  How bright her mien!

Far different we—a froward race,
Thousands, though rich in Fortune's grace,
With cherished sullenness of pace
  Their way pursue,
Ingrates who wear a smileless face
  The whole year through.

If kindred humours e'er would make
My spirit droop for drooping's sake,
From fancy following in thy wake,
  Bright ship of heaven!
A counter impulse let me take,
  And be forgiven.

Paraphrased this signifies: See the happy moon moving through the sky—how beautiful she is! It often happens that clouds hide her from us, or half conceal her. But those clouds break at last; and then how glorious the moon shines!

Human beings ought to imitate the moon in one regard. We ought to show happy faces whenever our troubles have

passed, just as the moon looks always bright when the vapours have passed her. But many people, even though rich and fortunate in their circumstances, refuse to be pleasant and contented. They are never grateful, never glad.

(The last stanza is addressed directly to the moon.) If I were one of those who could become needlessly sad—melancholy without reason—then I should pray to you, O beautiful moon, bright ship of heaven, to teach me better. My imagination as I watch you waxing and waning, becoming clouded and yet always becoming bright again, reminds me that we should always hope.

I do not want to give you a great number of poems of the same kind at the same time, for fear that you might lose interest in the subject. Let me therefore vary examples by giving you one illustration of love-poetry in relation to the moon. The most beautiful love-poem of this kind that I happen to know of, in English at least, is by an American —James Russell Lowell, one of the very few American poets who have made a name in English literature. He was at one time minister to England. His idea in this poem appears to me, if not exactly new, to be at least expressed in quite a novel way. The principal fancy is suggested by the scientific fact of the action of the moon upon the tides of the sea. Now, if you substitute the soul for the sea, its passions and emotions for the tides, and love for the moon, you can perceive at once what a fine opportunity is offered to poetry by the suggestion. I think that Lowell has used it very beautifully. This poem is entitled "The Moon."

My soul was like the sea,
Before the moon was made,
Moaning in vague immensity,
Of its own strength afraid,
Unrestful and unstaid.
Through every rift it foamed in vain,
About its earthly prison,
Seeking some unknown thing in pain,

And sinking restless back again,
For yet no moon had risen:
Its only voice a vast dumb moan,
Of utterless anguish speaking,
It lay unhopefully alone,
And lived but in an aimless seeking.

So was my soul; but when 'twas full
Of unrest to o'erloading,
A voice of something beautiful
Whispered a dim foreboding,
And yet so soft, so sweet, so low,
It had not more of joy than woe;
And as the sea doth oft lie still,
Making its waters meet,
As if by an unconscious will,
For the moon's silver feet,
So lay my soul within mine eyes
When thou, its guardian moon, didst rise.

And now, howe'er its waves above
May toss and seem uneaseful,
One strong, eternal law of love,
With guidance sure and peaceful,
As calm and natural as breath,
Moves its great deeps through life and death.

This almost takes us back in spirit to the Elizabethan Age. But I need not remind you that the scientific fancy is only playfully used. We may be quite certain that the sea is not older than the moon, and that the sea did not exist at any time before the moon. What the poet really wishes to suggest is the condition of affairs upon a planet, having an atmosphere but no moon. That is a question which has lately interested many astronomers, and especially the son of the great Charles Darwin, who has published a work upon the relation of tidal action to the revolution of planetary bodies. There would be tides upon the face of this earth, even if there were no moon; for there are what we call solar tides. But these are very slight movements compared with those

which the moon causes. A man living without love might well compare himself to a sea without any moon to direct its tides, but I need scarcely tell you that this fancy can not be exhausted by any one poem. It can be used in a thousand ways, and I recommend any of my hearers who compose poetry to think about it.

Shelley has written a number of poems about the moon, but nearly all were unfinished at the time of his death. They exist only as fragments, and none of them are worth quoting to you. But let me remind you that he made a beautiful translation of the ancient hymn of Homer to the moon; and if any of you should ever write an essay about moon-poetry, I hope you will not forget this beautiful translation. I can not quote it in this class, unfortunately, because of the very great number of mythological allusions, which would require too much time to explain. But Shelley has written perhaps the most beautiful English poem in existence on the more general subject of Night, and I can quote freely from that. The poem on Night is written after the Greek fashion, Night being personified as a beautiful dark-haired woman. Also this poem shows some traces of the old Greek poet Menander. Menander was a delightful poet; we have lost a great number of his compositions, but enough remains to make us regret forever that anything written by such a poet should perish. He was very fond of solitude and study; and he wrote a beautiful invocation to Night which is famous,—somewhat to this effect:

O holy Night, come thou hither and comfort me. To me thou art all perfume, all sweetness, all peace!

This is the devotion of the happy old Greek scholar to solitude and calm and the silence required for thought. I imagine that Shelley must have been inspired by Menander; but that does not affect the original worth of his poem, which is wonderfully beautiful.

TO NIGHT

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy in flower and tree,
And the weary day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Would'st thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon;
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night.
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

The poet is praying to the night to give him inspiration and calm,—not sleep. But before we go any further,—

and before I can explain the poem at all, I must talk to you about the Greek mythology in it. Otherwise you can not perfectly understand it.

In Greek mythology Night was a virgin goddess, daughter of Chaos. She gave birth, virgin-birth, to many children having no father; and among these children were Death, Sleep, and Dream. Also she was said to live in a cave at the end of the world. Day lived in the same cave. When Night came out of the cave, Day went in. This is the most ancient story about her. But Greek mythology is an exceedingly difficult subject, because it changes at almost every period of Greek literature. And you will not be surprised therefore when I tell you that different Greek poets, at different times, gave very different and very contradictory accounts of Night. Some poets called her the sister, not the mother, of Death; some said her cave was in the North; most of them said that it was in the West; but a Roman poet spoke of it as being in the East,—and Shelley follows him in this poem. All that is essential to remember is the association of Night with Death, Sleep, and Dream,—and the fact of her being a virgin goddess.

Now you will understand better what Shelley means by speaking of the "misty eastern cave" and about "night weaving dreams." Also you will better understand the description of her as bending down to cover the face of Day with her long black hair, and kissing her as one woman might caress another. And Shelley speaks of Day in the second stanza as feminine—he is not referring to Helios, the later sun god, but to Eos, or Aurora, the goddess of dawn. In the same stanza the word "opiate" used as an adjective signifies "sleep giving." After this you can easily comprehend the reference to Death and Sleep in the succeeding stanzas. Each asks the weary poet, "Shall not I be able to comfort you as well as Night?" But the poet wishes for neither the rest of Death nor the rest of Sleep. To Sleep he makes answer, "No, I do not wish for Death. He will come

sooner or later, when you can not come. And I do not wish to sleep; Sleep will come to me even when you have no more power to comfort me." It is the peace and inspiration of Night that he wants, in order to compose his verses.

As I told you, the influence of Menander appears in this poem,—especially in the use of the phrase "beloved Night." But it appears much more in a famous poem to Night written by Longfellow. Longfellow has composed five remarkable poems on the subject of Night and Moonlight; he was especially a poet of moonlight. Although the composition to which I have just referred is an early one, nevertheless it is beautiful enough and brief enough to quote in this place—at least the best of it:

I heard the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls.
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

. . . . . .

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of care,
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!

The beautiful parts of this poem are almost literally translated from the Greek. It was Menander especially who addressed the night with the words, "O holy night!" The reference to Orestes in the last stanza belongs to the Greek tragedy of Orestes,—it was dramatically treated both

by Sophocles and Æschylus. The story of Orestes is the terrible story of a man who, having killed his own mother because she had killed his father, is nevertheless punished by the gods for his offence against filial piety. The story afforded a great moral problem to the ancient dramatists. Filial piety was the indispensable virtue in Greek life; but Orestes was placed in the strange position of a man who had to confront two contradictory aspects of the moral law. As a son, he was bound to avenge his father; yet, as the enemy of his father was his own mother, he could not avenge his father without offending against the law—against the very law which it was his duty to obey. And the gods punished him by sending the Furies to torment him. At last they forgave him—because his case was such a very exceptional one. He had to bear only half the punishment. During the time when the Furies tormented him, he used to pray to Night and Sleep and Death to save him—to give him a moment's rest, or to destroy him utterly. This is the prayer that Longfellow speaks of; and the beautiful phrases in the last stanza are literally taken from the Greek.

The same poet has given us a much later poem on the subject of Night as the giver of peace and forgetfulness. This is much more serious, but an equally beautiful composition; and one of the comparisons in it deserves particular notice for its curious beauty.

NIGHT

Into the darkness and the hush of night
Slowly the landscape sinks, and fades away,
And with it fade the phantoms of the day,
The ghosts of men and things, that haunt the light:
The crowd, the clamour, the pursuit, the flight,
The unprofitable splendour and display,
The agitations, and the cares that prey
Upon our hearts, all vanish out of sight.
The better life begins; the world no more
Molests us; all its records we erase
From the dull commonplace book of our lives,

That like a palimpsest is written o'er
With trivial incidents of time and place,
And lo! the ideal, hidden beneath, revives.

There are two things especially to notice in this poem, before we speak of the general meaning. The first is the somewhat unfamiliar description of the landscape "sinking into darkness." Much more commonly do we find poets describing the darkness as coming down upon the landscape; scarcely ever do we find an English poet speaking of the landscape as descending into the darkness. Yet this unusual comparison is quite correct,—even more correct than the other. But you should be somewhere among mountains to understand how true it is. If you happened to be in a valley about sunset time with great peaks rising all about you, you would see that the darkness of the night does not "come down" at all. Quite the contrary. First the bottom of the valley becomes dark; then the blackness covers the smaller hill. The tops of the trees still catch the light; but the lower part of the trees can not be distinctly seen. Gradually the tops of the trees also disappear; and the darkness covers all except the very highest mountain peaks. One peak after another becomes black; then at last the very highest mountain top is also swallowed up by the flood of darkness. So that it is from the ground upwards that the night appears to grow. The effect, to the eye, is like that of a black flood rising up, or of the land itself sinking down into the dark. What poets have written about night descending from the sky is simply all wrong, and not at all true to observation. If you are ever among mountains at sunset time, please observe the effect, and see whether I have not correctly described it.

The other matter to which I want to call attention is the beautiful comparison about the palimpsest. Perhaps some of you may not know what a palimpsest is; and unless you know, you can not see the beauty of this poem. A palimpsest is the name given to an ancient Greek or Roman manu-

script, written upon parchment, from which the original writing was scraped off in order that the same parchment could be used again for the writing of another manuscript. Mediæval Christianity had no liking for the old Greek or Roman literature. The monks thought that all pagan literature was wicked, and when they happened to find a beautiful Greek or Roman manuscript they would scrape off all the writing, and use the parchment to copy some religious text upon it. But, by doing this, they preserved for us many things that would otherwise have been lost, for modern science discovered a way of removing the modern writing from the palimpsest and restoring the old Roman or Greek texts. And in this way we have been able to recover a considerable number of Greek poems and Latin texts. Remember only that these twice written parchments are called palimpsests. The poet tells us in this poem that the real life of the mind is not of the day, but of the night. When we can, we should think only about good and beautiful and happy things. But during the daytime we have very little leisure to do as we like, and can only do what we must. We have to earn a living; we have to perform many duties that are painful or disagreeable; we have to think about eating and drinking and paying money and arranging for the necessities of existence. It is only when the night comes that we are quite free to think about what is beautiful and what is good. And when this peaceful and happy darkness comes, then our minds suddenly become freed from all the memories and trifling details of the life of effort—just as the leaves of a palimpsest become freed from the mediæval writing which concealed the beautiful Greek or Latin thought. Then the true intellectual beauty can show itself, the ideal in the soul of man.

I shall not quote all of Longfellow's poems about night; it would require too much time. But I may quote to you a beautiful piece about moonlight. Longfellow has two pieces of great beauty about moonlight. One is called "The

Harvest Moon"; but it is not, I think, the better. I much prefer the simpler piece entitled "Moonlight" because of the thought that is in it:

As a pale phantom with a lamp
  Ascends some ruin's haunted stair,
So glides the moon along the damp
  Mysterious chambers of the air.

Now hidden in cloud, and now revealed,
  As if this phantom, full of pain,
Were by the crumbling walls concealed,
  And at the windows seen again.

Until at last, serene and proud
  In all the splendour of her light,
She walks the terraces of cloud,
  Supreme as Empress of the Night.

The allusion to the ghost with a lamp at once suggests to an English reader many traditions of his native country. But it is necessary to tell you that almost every ancient castle in England has its ghost story and its particular ghost. Usually the ghost is the figure of a woman in white, who is seen to climb up the broken stairways of some ruined tower at night. She walks where there are no more steps, and sometimes she can be seen looking out of the window of the room which has no floor. This is the comparison intended by Longfellow. But the latter part of the poem is the beautiful part—

I look, but recognise no more
  Objects familiar to my view;
The very pathway to my door
  Is an enchanted avenue.

All things are changed. One mass of shade,
  The elm-trees drop their curtains down;
By palace, park, and colonnade
I walk as in a foreign town.

The very ground beneath my feet
  Is clothed with a diviner air;

While marble paves the silent street
And glimmers in the empty square.

Moonlight changes and makes beautiful even common and ugly things. Japanese poets speak of snow as making a silver robe; western poets speak of moonlight only as doing this. Western poets do not find snow very beautiful; snowy landscapes are usually spoken of in relation to death and silence only; snow is often called the death-shroud of the world, or the funeral robe of the earth. The reason is that in western countries the winter is not really beautiful; and the reason why it is not beautiful is that there are very few evergreen trees. But in Japan, evergreen trees form a great part of the landscape scenery; evergreen trees look very beautiful when the snow lies upon them—whereas most of our western trees are deciduous, and become, as our poets say, "skeleton trees" in winter. So we do not find beauty in snow. But all that the Japanese poets find beautiful in snowy landscapes, western poets find in moonlight landscapes. You remember Tennyson's delightful lines:

Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon.

So we speak of the moon making a silver sea, silver rivers, silver waves. We speak of her as flooding the world with silver light. We speak of her as a great witch, who transforms all things by touching them. So the poet here tells us how at night even the street reaching to his house becomes enchanted under the light of the moon. The common clay is turned to silver dust; the common pavement is changed into white marble. The familiar town is so beautiful and so different under that magic light that it looks like a foreign town, and even the air appears to have become in some way divine. Now listen to the moral of the poem:

Illusion! underneath there lies
The common life of every day;

Only the spirit glorifies
With its own tints the sober grey.

In vain we look, in vain uplift
Our eyes to heaven, if we are blind;
We see but what we have the gift
Of seeing; what we bring we find.

This is as true as it is fine. The beautiful moonlight does not really change anything; it only seems to change the world; it is an illusion. The truth is that the beauty of this silver scenery exists only in our minds. But that is true of everything in our lives. Whoever wishes to see beauty, will always be able to find it if he has a beautiful soul, a beautiful mind. He who has not a beautiful mind, will never be able to enjoy the world. A person without imagination is very much like a man without eyes; he can not see the charming illusions which nature everywhere prepares for him.

You have all heard of Professor Gosse, a great authority on English literature, a charming writer of prose, and in his leisure hours a poet. Most of his poems are very scholarly—mere studies in different forms of verse; I am not sure that they could interest you. But he has translated from the Swedish a very pretty composition about the moon, expressing the same thought uttered by Coleridge and Wordsworth, in a somewhat different way. The poem is entitled "Luna" —which you know to be the Latin name of the moon. It is a sonnet.

Deep slumber hung o'er sea and hill and plain;
With pale pink cheek fresh from her watery caves
Slow rose the moon out of the midnight waves,
Like Venus out of ocean born again;
Then blazed Olympian on the dark blue main;
"So shall my star," hark how my weak hope raves!
"My happy star ascend the sea that laves
Its shores with grief, and silence all my pains."
With that there sighed a wandering midnight breeze
High up among the topmost tufted trees,

And o'er the moon's face blew a veil of cloud;
And in the breeze my genius spake and said,
"While thy heart stirs, thy glimmering hope has fled,
And like the moon lies muffled in a shroud."

The mythological allusions need explanation perhaps. Remember that the goddess of love was called in Greek mythology the foam-born, because she was supposed to have been made out of the foam of the sea. In the fourth line of the poem the poet compares the moon, rising from the sea, to Venus born a second time. The adjective "Olympian" used in the Greek sense means god-like; the gods were supposed to dwell upon the mountain Olympus, and they are called therefore the Olympians. In the third line from the end of the poem, please notice the word "genius"; this term is also used in the classic sense, and means a guardian spirit; it has nothing to do with the modern meaning which we give to the word. Altogether this is a good example of a contemporary classic poem. And I suppose Mr. Gosse translated it only as an example of the classic style. But it is good, and I think that you can easily see the meaning of it. The solitary thinker observing the moon rise brightly out of the bitter sea thinks to himself that it is a happy omen. "Sometime in the future," he says, "my life will be illuminated by a success, by a gladdening, as now the sea is illuminated by the moon." But even while he speaks thus to himself, a wind arises, and blows a cloud across the moon. Then the guardian spirit of the man mocks him for depending thus upon so uncertain an omen. Even while your heart had only time to beat once, that hope of yours is gone; it is all darkened, like the moon by a cloud.

It has frequently been observed by Japanese poets as well as by western poets, that the aspects of nature, and the sounds of nature, affect us pleasurably or otherwise very much according to the state of our mind at the time that we see her beauties or hear her voices. The last poem about the moon indicated a melancholy state of mind on the part of

the poet; but often poets have been made much more sad by the sight of the moon, or have been impelled to express still more melancholy fancies. The most melancholy of all western poems on the subject of night and the moon are those of the Italian Leopardi; but they need not concern us here, for English poets can give us numerous examples of melancholy thought on the subject. Christina Rossetti, the very first of English female poets in point of excellence and correct taste, has actually compared the sight of the heavens at night to the sight of a funeral. I quote one stanza from her little poem entitled "Death-watches":

> The cloven East brings forth the sun,
> The cloven West doth bury him
> What time his gorgeous race is run
> And all the world grows dim;
> A funeral moon is lit in heaven's hollow,
> And pale the star-lights follow.

Of course this is a play of fancy upon the old poetical idea of sunset as representing the death of the day. By this time you must have become familiar with such English poetical idioms as "the dying day," "the dying sun," "sun-death," "the red death of the day-star," "the sanguine West," "the waters dyed with the blood-red of the sinking sun." All these expressions sound strange, I think, to your ears; but they have been common in Europe for many centuries. I think that Miss Rossetti was, however, one of the first to carry out the whole idea of the sun's funeral in this way,—representing the moon as a funeral lamp, and the procession of stars as a long train of mourners carrying lights. Yet there is a much more effective way in poetry of expressing the real romance of the moon. Do you not remember an old Chinese poem about a lover looking at the moon, far away from home, and suddenly thinking to himself that the same moon is now shining upon the home of the person whom he loves, thousands of miles away? This kind of sentiment in poetry is really one of the very finest that mankind has yet

been able to express—I mean the consciousness of the relation between the emotion and the nature that inspires it. Really, nature in herself is almost nothing. The thing that we should try to express in poetry is the feeling which nature creates in us. No matter how cleverly you try to describe a landscape, you never can exactly paint it in words. But you can do something much better than that. You can express the thoughts and feelings that you have while looking at it. Now there is a very famous English poem in which the whole effect is made by the very same method as that used by the old Chinese poet of whom I spoke to you a little time ago. When I was a boy everybody used to learn that little poem; and it used to be recited in classes of oratory. I think that some of you may know it; so it will not be necessary to quote the whole of it; for it is rather long. But I want to quote to you so much of it as will illustrate that rule of literary art which I have suggested,—about describing the emotion caused by some natural spectacle rather than trying to describe the spectacle in itself. The name of the little poem is "Bingen on the Rhine." It was written by an English lady, Mrs. Caroline Elizabeth Norton, and it is one of the few things that keep her memory fresh in the pages of popular anthologies.

For the benefit of any of you who may not happen to know the poem, I want to say something about the Foreign Legion. The French Foreign Legion, as it is called, is one of the most famous and the most curious military bodies in existence. It formerly consisted, I think, of only two legions; but in later years some changes have been made; I believe that the forces are stronger than they were before. The Foreign Legion was not composed of French soldiers, nor was it formed by conscription. All the men who belonged to it were volunteers—men from every nation and almost every country. Men did not join the Foreign Legion in the hope of glory or gain, as a general rule. They entered it, at least many of them, in the hope of throwing their lives

away in an honourable fashion. When a man entered the Foreign Legion he changed his name, and he was thereafter probably dead to society. Nobody ever asked who he was or what he used to do. He was only asked to do his duty as a soldier; and the discipline was very severe. Men who had done some great wrong for which society would not forgive them, men who had committed some folly of which they were ashamed, men who had lost their fortunes in gambling,—refugees, desperate men of all kinds, used to enter that legion. It was a kind of fashionable way of committing suicide. And the mixture was a very strange one. Some of the common soldiers had once been great lords; others, perhaps, had only been brigands. A few may have served for pay only,—the pay was high. The legion was foreign in both senses of the word; it was not used for home duty, but kept chiefly in the colonies, and sent to the ends of the earth on desperate expeditions. When there was something very terrible to do, something that required hundreds to sacrifice their lives, appeal was generally made to the Foreign Legion.

A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was dearth of woman's tears;
But a comrade stood beside him, while his life-blood ebbed away,
And bent, with pitying glances, to hear what he might say.
The dying soldier faltered, and he took that comrade's hand;
And he said, "I never more shall see my own, my native land:
Take a message, and a token, to some distant friends of mine,
For I was born at Bingen,—at Bingen on the Rhine.

"Tell my brothers and companions, when they meet and crowd around,
To hear my mournful story, in the pleasant vineyard ground,
That we fought the battle bravely, and when the day was done
Full many a corse lay ghastly pale beneath the setting sun;
And, 'mid the dead and the dying were some grown old in wars,
The death-wound on their gallant breasts, the last of many scars,
And some were young, and suddenly beheld life's morn decline,—
And one had come from Bingen,—fair Bingen on the Rhine.

"Tell my mother that her other son shall comfort her old age;
For I was still a truant bird, that thought his home a cage,
For my father was a soldier, and even as a child
My heart leaped forth to hear him tell of struggles fierce and wild;
And when he died, and left us to divide his scanty hoard,
I let them take whate'er they would,—but kept my father's sword;
And with boyish love I hung it where the bright light used to shine,
On the cottage wall at Bingen,—calm Bingen on the Rhine.

"Tell my sister not to weep for me, and sob with drooping head,
When the troops come marching home again, with glad and gallant tread,
But to look upon them proudly with a calm and steadfast eye,
For her brother was a soldier too, and not afraid to die;
And if a comrade seek her love, I ask her in my name,
To listen to him kindly, without regret or shame,
And to hang the old sword in its place (my father's sword and mine)
For the honour of old Bingen,—dear Bingen on the Rhine.

"There's another, not a sister; in the happy days gone by
You'd have known her by the merriment that sparkled in her eye;
Too innocent for coquetry, too fond for idle scorning,
O friend! I fear the lightest heart makes sometimes heaviest mourning!
Tell her the last night of my life (for ere the moon be risen,
My body will be out of pain, my soul be out of prison),—
I dreamed I stood with her, and saw the yellow sunlight shine
On the vine-clad hills of Bingen,—fair Bingen on the Rhine."

. . . . . .

His trembling voice grew faint and hoarse,—his grasp was childish weak,
His eyes put on a dying look,—he sighed and ceased to speak;
His comrade bent to lift him, but the spark of life had fled,—
The soldier of the Legion in a foreign land was dead!
And the soft moon rose up slowly, and calmly she looked down
On the red sand of the battlefield, with bloody corses strewn;
Yes, calmly on that dreadful scene her pale light seemed to shine
As it shone on distant Bingen,—fair Bingen on the Rhine.

The reference to the red sand in the last stanza is local, for the fight took place in Algeria, and probably in the south-

ern part, beyond the edge of the desert. There is nothing to explain in the text of the poem, I think, except perhaps the word "coquetry" in one of the stanzas. The word may be used in two senses,—one signifying only pretty and mischievous, the other meaning bad, and that is the meaning in the text. Some handsome girls, having the power to attract the attention and the admiration of men, like to amuse themselves by testing their power upon those who admire them,—trying to see how much influence they have over a man, without caring for him personally in the least. Girls who act this way toward lovers are said to be guilty of coquetry in the bad sense. Perhaps, in the same stanza, the phrase "idle scorning" may be a little obscure,—you had better understand it to mean foolish pride. There is nothing else to explain.

The qualities in this simple but strong poem really belong to a very high class of literature,—that literature which does not belong to any particular time or country, which does not depend upon local effect, and which can be translated into almost any language without losing its pathos or truth or beauty. The incident described, with scarcely a difference of the tale, might as well be of Japanese life as of German life. If you translate those stanzas, even into Japanese prose, you will see that they do not lose their touching quality or their truth by such translation. But, as I mentioned before, the poem is related to the subject of this lecture only by the last stanza. It is in the closing lines about the moon, —looking down upon the bloody desert and the dead bodies of the soldiers, but looking down at the same time, with the same calm, upon the quiet German town so many hundreds of miles away,—it is in these closing lines, I think, that the great force and beauty of the composition lies. There is almost what we might call "the supreme touch" of emotional art. I think you can see why; but I must try to explain why as definitely as possible. In the previous part of the poem our natural emotions of pity,

of love, and of sympathy have been gradually stirred more and more by each succeeding stanza, until the death scene is over. Then, while our feelings are still vibrating in sympathy with the pathos of the story, suddenly comes, like a cold shock, the revelation, the apparition, the surprise of the absolute indifference of nature. The moon sees all this, and much more, and is not in the least changed thereby; the very calmness and purity of her light seems almost cruel under such circumstances. A great modern French poet made a great success by a touch of the very same kind in a poem about Eyes, which I think I read to you long ago. He makes us think about all the millions of beautiful eyes, human eyes, that once looked upon the sun, and that are now dust. "But," he tells us, "the same sun rises every morning just as usual!" It is this same suggestion of nature's indifference that becomes so powerfully pathetic when artistically introduced at the close of the poem we have just read together.

In this case the emotional shock is immediate—it comes as an impulse to present feeling, to the feeling aroused by something mentally seen at the same time. In great drama, great tragical drama, effects of this kind are often given. But in the case of the French poet's composition, the feeling is retrospective,—is aroused by reflection upon the past. The usual impression which night and its sounds or sights make upon us is apt to be of this kind. More intimate and immediately touching effects, such as those produced in the last stanza of "Bingen on the Rhine," are really uncommon even in poetry, and for that reason ought to be the more prized.

Of the other kind, the retrospective kind, of melancholy feeling, a famous modern example is Matthew Arnold's poem entitled "Dover Beach." This is a meditation on the shore of the sea at night, and a very melancholy meditation, though full of depth and beauty. The part of it that I shall quote particularly refers to a certain effect of night

sounds, which I am sure you have all noticed. Sounds appear to deepen as the night deepens; because as the noises of human and animal life gradually cease in sleep, those voices of nature that are never silent become more profoundly audible. You must have noticed how much louder the noise of the sea appears to be during the night than during the day. And the loudness of it gives us solemn and lonesome thoughts that we do not have at other times. Such were the thoughts that came to Matthew Arnold one night listening to the sea at Dover. He remembers how the Greek poets thousands of years ago had listened to the same sound with the same feeling, and thought about human life.

The sea is calm to-night,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought
Into his mind the troubled ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

There is a certain quality of cosmic emotion in these lines: the memory of the Greek poet, and of his thought about the same sound, gives a sense of relationship to all the humanity of past ages. In many of the poems which we have read about the moon, you have noticed that the same kind of

emotion is given by the sight of the stars, the moon, or the deeps of the sky. But we can not always have our emotions upon so large a scale; and the larger an emotion, the more apt it is to be a little vague, indefinite. Naturally philosophic thinkers prefer the vast; the majority of ordinary readers, on the other hand, prefer the direct appeal to common emotion and thought. There is nothing very grand about the following well known poem by Bourdillon, which has become a classic. But although it is pretty and touching rather than grand, one can not ever quite forget it after having read it; and it must have the true quality of world-poetry in it, because it has been translated into many languages. It will serve as a kind of ornamental ending or "tail-piece" to the present lecture.

The night has a thousand eyes
  And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
  With the dying sun!

The mind has a thousand eyes,
  And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
  When love is done!

CHAPTER XVII

NOTE UPON THE SHORTEST FORMS OF ENGLISH POETRY

PERHAPS there is an idea among Japanese students that one general difference between Japanese and western poetry is that the former cultivates short forms and the latter longer ones. But this is only in part true. It is true that short forms of poetry have been cultivated in the Far East more than in modern Europe; but in all European literature short forms of poetry are to be found—indeed quite as short as anything in Japanese. Like the Japanese, the old Greeks, who carried poetry to the highest perfection that it has ever attained, delighted in short forms; and the Greek Anthology is full of compositions containing only two or three lines,—such as those charming lines addressed to a beloved person, which John Addington Symonds thus translated:

> Gazing on stars, my Star?—
> Would that I were the welkin,
> Starry with myriad eyes, ever to gaze upon Thee!

You will find beautiful translations of these in Symond's "Studies of Greek Poets," in the second volume. Following Greek taste, the Roman poets afterwards cultivated short forms of verse, but they chiefly used such verse for satirical purposes, unfortunately; I say, unfortunately, because the first great English poets who imitated the ancients were chiefly influenced by the Latin writers, and they also used the short forms for epigrammatic satire, rarely for a purely esthetic object. Ben Jonson both wrote and translated a great number of very short verses—two lines and four lines; but Jonson was a satirist in these forms. Herrick, as you

know, delighted in very short poems; but he was greatly influenced by Jonson, and many of his couplets and of his quatrains are worthless satires or worthless jests. However, you will find some short verses in Herrick that almost make you think of a certain class of Japanese poems. After the Elizabethan Age, also, the miniature poems were still used in the fashion set by the Roman writers,—then the eighteenth century deluged us with ill-natured witty epigrams of the like brief form. It was not until comparatively modern times that our western world fully recognised the value of the distich, triplet or quatrain for the expression of beautiful thoughts, rather than for the expression of ill-natured ones. But now that the recognition has come, it has been discovered that nothing is harder than to write a beautiful poem of two or four lines. Only great masters have been truly successful at it. Goethe, you know, made a quatrain that has become a part of world-literature:

> Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,—
> Who ne'er the lonely midnight hours,
> Weeping upon his bed has sate,
> He knows ye not, ye Heavenly Powers!

—meaning, of course, that inspiration and wisdom come to us only through sorrow, and that those who have never suffered never can be wise. But in the universities of England a great deal of short work of a most excellent kind has been done in Greek and Latin; and there is the celebrated case of an English student who won a prize by a poem of a single line. The subject given had been the miracle of Christ's turning water into wine at the marriage feast; and while other scholars attempted elaborate composition on the theme, this student wrote but one verse, of which the English translation is

> The modest water saw its Lord, and blushed.

Of course the force of the idea depends upon the popular conception of wine being red. The Latin and Greek model,

however, did not seem to encourage much esthetic effort in short poems of English verse until the time of the romantic movement. Then, both in France and England, many brief poems of poetry made their appearance. In France, Victor Hugo attempted composition in astonishingly varied forms of verse—some forms actually consisting of only two syllables to a line. With this surprisingly short measure begins one of Hugo's most remarkable early poems, "Les Djins," representing the coming of evil spirits with a storm, their passing over the house where a man is at prayer, and departing into the distance again. Beginning with only two syllables to the line, the measure of the poem gradually widens as the spirits approach, becomes very wide, very long and sonorous as they reach the house, and again shrinks back to lines of two syllables as the sound of them dies away. In England a like variety of experiments had been made; but neither in France nor in England has the short form yet been as successfully cultivated as it was among the Greeks. We have some fine examples; but, as an eminent English editor observed a few years ago, not enough examples to make a book. And of course this means that there are very few; for you can make a book of poetry very well with as little as fifty pages of largely and widely printed text. However, we may cite a few modern instances.

I think that about the most perfect quatrains we have are those of the extraordinary man, Walter Savage Landor, who, you know, was a rare Greek scholar, all his splendid English work being very closely based upon the Greek models. He made a little epitaph upon himself, which is matchless of its kind:

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
> Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life:
> It sinks; and I am ready to depart.

You know that Greeks used the short form a great deal for their exquisite epitaphs, and that a considerable part of

the anthology consists of epitaphic literature. But the quatrain has a much wider range than this funereal limitation, and one such example of epitaph will suffice.

Only one English poet of our own day, and that a minor one, has attempted to make the poem of four lines a specialty —that is William Watson. He has written a whole volume of such little poems, but very few of them are successful. As I said before, we have not enough good poems of this sort for a book; and the reason is not because English poets despise the short form, but because it is supremely difficult. The Greeks succeeded in it, but we are still far behind the Greeks in the shaping of any kind of verse. The best of Watson's pieces take the form of philosophical suggestions; and this kind of verse is particularly well adapted to philosophical utterance.

> Think not thy wisdom can illume away
> The ancient tanglement of night and day.
> Enough to acknowledge both, and both revere,
> They see not clearliest who see all things clear.

That is to say, do not think that any human knowledge will ever be able to make you understand the mystery of the universe with its darkness and light, its joy and pain. It is best to revere the powers that make both good and evil, and to remember that the keenest, worldly, practical minds are not the minds that best perceive the great truths and mysteries of existence. Here is another little bit, reminding us somewhat of Goethe's quatrain, already quoted.

> Lives there whom pain hath evermore passed by
> And sorrow shunned with an averted eye?
> Him do thou pity,—him above the rest,
> Him, of all hapless mortals most unblessed.

That needs no commentary, and it contains a large truth in small space. Here is a little bit on the subject of the artist's ambition, which is also good.

The thousand painful steps at last are trod,
  At last the temple's difficult door we win,
But perfect on his pedestal, the God
  Freezes us hopeless when we enter in.

The higher that the artist climbs by effort, the nearer his approach to the loftier truth, the more he understands how little his very best can achieve. It is the greatest artist, he who veritably enters the presence of God—that most feels his own weakness; the perception of beauty that other men can not see, terrifies him, freezes him motionless, as the poet says.

Out of all of Watson's epigrams I believe these are the best. The rest with the possible exception of those on the subject of love seem to me altogether failures. Emerson and various American poets also attempted the quatrain—but Emerson's verse is nearly always bad, even when his thought is sublime. One example of Emerson will suffice.

Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,
  Or dip thy paddle in the lake
But it carves the bow of beauty there,
  And the ripples in rhyme the oar forsake.

The form is atrociously bad; but the reflection is grand—it is another way of expressing the beautiful old Greek thought that "God *geometrizes* everywhere"—that is, that all motion is in geometrical lines, and full of beauty. You can pick hundreds of fine things in very short verse out of Emerson, but the verse is nearly always shapeless; the composition of the man invariably makes us think of diamonds in the rough, jewels uncut. So far as form goes a much better master of quatrain is the American poet Aldrich, who wrote the following little thing, entitled "Popularity."

Such kings of shreds have wooed and won her,
  Such crafty knaves her laurel owned,
It has become almost an honour
  Not to be crowned.

This is good verse. The reference to "a king of shreds and patches"—that is, a beggar king—you will recognise as Shakespearean. But although this pretty verse has in it more philosophy than satire, it approaches the satiric class of epigrams. Neither America nor England has been able to do very much in the sort of verse that we have been talking about. Now this is a very remarkable thing,—because at the English universities beautiful work has been done in Greek or Latin—in poems of a single line, of two lines, of three lines and other very brief measures. Why can it not be done in English? I suspect that it is because our English language has not yet become sufficiently perfect, sufficiently flexible, sufficiently melodious to allow of great effect with a very few words. We can do the thing in Greek or in Latin because either Greek or Latin is a more perfect language.

So much for theory. I should like to suggest, however, that it is very probable many attempts at these difficult forms of poetry will be attempted by English poets within the next few years. There is now a tendency in that direction. I do not know whether such attempts will be successful; but I should like you to understand that for western poets they are extremely difficult and that you ought to obtain from the recognition of this fact a new sense of the real value of your own short forms of verse in the hands of a master. Effects can be produced in Japanese which the Greeks could produce with few syllables, but which the English can not. Now it strikes me that, instead of even thinking of throwing away old forms of verse in order to invent new ones, the future Japanese poets ought rather to develop and cultivate and prize the forms already existing, which belong to the genius of the language, and which have proved themselves capable of much that no English verse or even French verse could accomplish. Perhaps only the Italian is really comparable to Japanese in some respects; you can perform miracles with Italian verse.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME FOREIGN POEMS ON JAPANESE SUBJECTS

THE western poet and writer of romance has exactly the same kind of difficulty in comprehending eastern subjects as you have in comprehending western subjects. You will commonly find references to Japanese love poems of the popular kind, made in such a way as to indicate the writer's belief that such poems refer to married life or at least to a courtship relation. No western writer who has not lived for many years in the East, could write correctly about anything on this subject; and even after a long stay in the country he might be unable to understand. Therefore a great deal of western poetry written about Japan must seem to you all wrong, and I can not hope to offer you many specimens of work in this direction that could deserve your praise. Yet there is some poetry so fine on the subject of Japan that I think you would admire it and I am sure that you should know it. A proof of really great art is that it is generally true—it seldom falls into the misapprehensions to which minor art is liable. What do you think of the fact that the finest poetry ever written upon a Japanese subject by any western poet, has been written by a man who never saw the land? But he is a member of the French Academy, a great and true lover of art, and without a living superior in that most difficult form of poetry, the sonnet. In the time of thirty years he produced only one very small volume of sonnets, but so fine are these that they were lifted to the very highest place in poetical distinction. I may say that there are now only three really great French poets—survivals of the grand romantic school. These are Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, and José Maria de Heredia. It is

the last of whom I am speaking. As you can tell by his name, he is not a Frenchman either by birth or blood, but a Spaniard, or rather a Spanish Creole, born in Cuba. Heredia knows Japan only through pictures, armour, objects of art in museums, paintings and carvings. Remembering this, I think that you will find that he does wonderfully well. It is true that he puts a woman in one of his pictures, but I think that his management of his subject is very much nearer the truth than that of almost any writer who has attempted to describe old Japan. And you must understand that the following sonnet is essentially intended to be a picture—to produce upon the mind exactly the same effect that a picture does, with the addition of such life as poetry can give.

LE SAMOURAI

D'un doigt distrait frôlant la sonore bîva,
A travers les bambous tressés en fine latte,
Elle a vu, par la plage éblouissante et plate,
S'avancer le vainqueur que son amour rêva.

C'est lui. Sabres au flanc, l'éventail haut, il va.
La cordelière rouge et le gland écarlate
Coupent l'armure sombre, et, sur l'épaule, éclate
Le blazon de Hizen on de Tokungawa.

Ce beau guerrier vêtu de lames et de plaques,
Sous le bronze, la soie, et les brillantes laques,
Semble un crustacé noir, gigantesque et vermeil.

Il l'a vue. Il sourit dans la barbe du masque,
Et son pas plus hâtif fait reluire au soleil
Les deux antennes d'or qui tremblent à son casque.

"Lightly touching her *biva* with heedless finger, she has perceived through the finely woven bamboo screen, the conqueror, lovingly thought of, approach over the dazzling level of the beach.

"It is he. With his swords at his side he advances, holding up his fan. The red girdle and the scarlet tassel appear

in sharply cut relief against the dark armour; and upon his shoulder glitters a crest of Hizen or of Tokugawa.

"This handsome warrior sheathed with his scales and plates of metal, under his bronze, his silk and glimmering lacquer, seems a crustacean, gigantic, black and vermilion.

"He has caught sight of her. Under the beaver of the war mask he smiles, and his quickened step makes to glitter in the sun the two antennæ of gold that quiver upon his helmet."

The comparison of a warrior in full armour to a gigantic crab or lobster, especially lobster, is not exactly new. Victor Hugo has used it before in French literature, just as Carlyle has used it in English literature; indeed the image could not fail to occur to the artist in any country where the study of armour has been carried on. But here the poet does not speak of any particular creature; he uses only the generic term, crustacean, the vagueness of which makes the comparison much more effective. I think you can see the whole picture at once. It is a Japanese colour-print,—some ancient interior, lighted by the sun of a great summer day; and a woman looking through a bamboo blind toward the seashore, where she sees a warrior approaching. He divines that he is seen; but if he smiles, it is only because the smile is hidden by his iron mask. The only sign of any sentiment on his part is that he walks a little quicker. Still more amazing is a companion picture, containing only a solitary figure:

LE DAIMIO (Matin de bataille)

Sous le noir fouet de guerre a quadruple pompon,
L'étalon belliqueux en hennissant se cabre,
Et fait bruire, avec de cliquetis de sabre,
La cuirasse de bronze aux lames du jupon.

Le Chef vêtu d'airain, de laque et de crépon.
Otant le masque à poils de son visage glabre,
Regarde le volcan sur un ciel de cinabre
Dresser la neige où rit l'aurore de Nippon.

Mais il a vu, vers l'Est éclabussé d'or, l'astre,
Glorieux d'eclairer ce matin de désastre,
Poindre, orbe éblouissant, au-dessus de la mer;

Et pour couvrir ses yeux dont pas un cil ne bouge,
Il ouvre d'un seul coup son évantail de fer,
Ou dans le satin blanc se lève un Soleil rouge.

"Under the black war whip with its quadruple pompon the fierce stallion, whinnying, curvets, and makes the rider's bronze cuirasse ring against the plates of his shirt of mail, with a sound like the clashing of sword blades.

"The Chief, clad in bronze and lacquer and silken crape, removing the bearded masque from his beardless face, turns his gaze to the great volcano, lifting its snows into the cinnabar sky where the dawn of Nippon begins to smile.

"Nay! he has already seen the gold-spattered day star, gloriously illuminating the morning of disaster, rise, a blinding disk, above the seas. And to shade his eyes, on both of which not even a single eyelash stirs, he opens with one quick movement his iron fan, wherein upon a field of white satin there rises a crimson sun."

Of course this hasty translation is very poor; and you can only get from it the signification and colour of the picture—the beautiful sonority and luminosity of the French is all gone. Nevertheless, I am sure that the more you study the original the more you will see how fine it is. Here also is a Japanese colour print. We see the figure of the horseman on the shore, in the light of dawn; behind him the still dark sky of night; before him the crimson dawn, and Fuji white against the red sky. And in the open fan, with its red sun, we have a grim suggestion of the day of blood that is about to be; that is all. But whoever reads that sonnet will never forget it; it burns into the memory. So, indeed, does everything that Heredia writes. Unfortunately he has not yet written anything more about Japan.

I have quoted Heredia because I think that no other poet has even approached him in the attempt to make a Japanese

picture—though many others have tried; and the French, nearly always, have done much better than the English, because they are more naturally artists. Indeed one must be something of an artist to write anything in the way of good poetry on a Japanese subject. If you look at the collection "Poems of Places," in the library, you will see how poorly Japan is there represented; the only respectable piece of foreign work being by Longfellow, and that is only about Japanese vases. But since then some English poems have appeared which are at least worthy of Japanese notice.

CHAPTER XIX

FAREWELL ADDRESS

Now that the term comes to a close, I think that it would be well to talk about the possible values of the studies which we have made together, in relation to Japanese literature. For, as I have often said, the only value of foreign literary studies to you (using the word literary in the artistic sense) must be that of their effect upon your own capacity to make literature in your own tongue. Just as a Frenchman does not write English books or a German French books, except in the way of scientific treatise, so the Japanese scholar who makes literature will not waste time by attempting to make it in another language than his own. And as his own is so very differently constructed in all respects from the European language, he can scarcely hope to obtain much in the way of new form from the study of French or English or German. So I think that we may say the chief benefit of these studies to you must be in thought, imagination and feeling. From western thought and imagination and feeling very much indeed can be obtained which will prove helpful in enriching and strengthening the Japanese literature of the future. It is by such studies that all western languages obtain—and obtain continually—new life and strength. English literature owes something to almost every other literature, not only in Europe, but even in the whole civilised world. The same can be said of French and German literature—perhaps also, though in less degree, of modern Italian. But notice that the original plant is not altered by the new sap; it is only made stronger and able to bear finer flowers. As English literature remains essentially English in spite of the riches gained from all other literatures, so should future

Japanese literature remain purely Japanese, no matter how much benefit it may obtain from the ideas and the arts of the West.

If you were to ask me, however, whether I knew of any great changes so far, I fear that I should be obliged to say, "no." Up to the present I think that there has been a great deal of translation and imitation and adoption into Japanese, from western literatures, but I do not think that there has been what we call true assimilation. Literature must be creative, and borrowing, or imitating, or adapting material in the raw state—none of this is creative. Yet it is natural that things should be so. This is the period of assimilation; later on the fine result will show, when all this foreign material has been transmuted, within the crucible of literature, into purely Japanese materials. But this can not be done quickly.

Now I want to say something about the manner in which I imagine that these changes, and a new literature, must come about. I believe that there will have to be a romantic movement in Japan, of a much more deep-reaching kind than may now appear credible. I think that—to say the strangest thing first—the language of scholarship will have to be thrown away for purposes of creative art. I think that a time must come when the scholar will not be ashamed to write in the language of the common people, to make it a vehicle of his best and strongest thought, to enter into competition with artists who would now be classed as uneducated, perhaps even vulgar men. Perhaps it will seem a strange thing to say, yet I think that there is no doubt about it. Very probably almost any university scholar consciously or unconsciously despises the colloquial art of the professional story teller and the writer of popular plays in popular speech; nevertheless, if we can judge at all by the history of literary evolutions in other countries, it is the despised drama and the despised popular story and the vulgar song of the people which will prove the sources of future Japanese

literature—a finer literature than any which has hitherto been produced.

I have not the slightest doubt that Shakespeare was considered very vulgar in the time when he wrote his plays—at least by common opinion. There were a few men intelligent enough to feel that his work was more alive than any other drama of the time. But these were exceptional men. And you know that in the eighteenth century the classical spirit was just as strong in England as it is now, or has been, in Japan. The reproach of the "vulgar," I mean the reproach of vulgarity, would have been brought in Pope's time against anybody who should have tried to write in the form which we now know to be much superior. I have told you also how the great literatures of France and Germany were obliged to pass through a revolution against classical forms, which revolution brought into existence the most glorious work, both in poetry and prose, that either country ever produced.

But remember how the revolution began to work in all these countries of the West. It began with a careful and loving study of the despised oral literature of the common people. It meant the descent of great scholars from their thrones of learning to mix with peasants and ignorant people, to speak their dialects, to sympathise with their simple but deep and true emotions. I do not say that the scholar went to live in a farmhouse, or to share the poverty and misery of the wretched in great cities; I mean only that he descended to them in spirit—sympathised with them—conquered his prejudices—learned to love them for the simple goodness and the simple truth in their uneducated natures. I think I told you before that even at one period of old Greek literature, the Greek had to do something of very nearly the same kind. So I say that, in my humble opinion, a future literature in this country must be more or less founded upon a sympathy with and a love for the common, ignorant people, the great mass of the national humanity.

Now let me try to explain how and why these things have come to pass in almost every civilised country. The natural tendency of society is to produce class distinctions, and everywhere the necessary tendency in the highest classes must be to conservatism—elegant conservatism. Conservatism and exclusiveness have their values; and I do not mean to suggest the least disrespect toward them. But conservatism invariably tends to fixity, to mannerisms, to a hard crystallisation. At length refined society obliges everybody to do and say according to rule—to express or to repress thought and feeling in the same way. Of course men's hearts can not be entirely changed by rule; but such a tyranny of custom can be made that everybody is afraid to express thought or to utter feeling in a really natural way. When life becomes intensely artificial, severely conventional, literature begins to die. Then, western experience shows that there is one cure; nothing can bring back the failing life except a frank return to the unconventional, a frank return to the life and thought of the common people, who represent after all the soil from which everything human springs. When a language becomes hopelessly petrified by rules, it can be softened and strengthened and vivified by taking it back to its real source, the people, and soaking it there as in a bath. Everywhere this necessity has shown itself; everywhere it has been resisted with all the strength of pride and prejudice; but everywhere its outcome has been the same. French or German or English alike, after having exhausted all the resources of scholarship to perfect literature, have found literature beginning to dry and wither on their hands; and have been obliged to remove it from the atmosphere of the schools and to resurrect it by means of the literature of the ignorant. As this has happened everywhere else, I can not help believing that it must happen here.

Yet do not think that I mean to speak at all slightingly about the value of exact learning. Quite the contrary. I hold that it is the man of exact learning who best—provid-

ing that he has a sympathetic nature—can master to good result the common speech and the unlettered poetry. A Cambridge education, for example, did not prevent Tennyson from writing astonishing ballads or dramatic poems in ballad measure in the difficult dialect of the northern English peasant. Indeed, in English literature the great Romantic reformers were all, or nearly all, well schooled men, but they were men who had artistic spirit enough to conquer the prejudices with which they were born, and without heeding the mockery of their own class, bravely worked to extract from simple peasant lore those fresh beauties which give such desirable qualities to Victorian poetry. Indeed, some went further—Sir Walter Scott, for example, who rode about the country, going into the houses of the poorest people, eating with them and drinking with them, and everywhere coaxing them to sing him a song or tell him a story of the past. I suppose there were many people who would then have laughed at Scott. But those little peasant songs which he picked out started the new English poetry. The whole literary tone of the eighteenth century was changed by them. Therefore I should certainly venture to hope that there yet may be a Japanese Walter Scott, whose learning will not prevent him from sympathising with the unlearned.

Now I have said quite enough on that subject; and I have ventured it only through a sense of duty. The rest of what I have to say refers only to literary work.

I suppose that most of you, on leaving the University, will step into some profession likely to absorb a great deal of your time. Under these circumstances many a young man who loves literature resigns himself foolishly to give up his pleasures in this direction; such young scholars imagine that they have no time now for poetry or romance or drama—not even for much private study. I think that this is a very great mistake, and that it is the busy man who can best give us new literature—with the solitary exception perhaps of poetry. Great poetry requires leisure, and much time for

solitary thinking. But in other departments of literature I can assure you that the men-of-letters throughout the West have been, and still are, to a great extent, very busy men. Some are in the government service, some in post offices, some in the army and navy (and you know how busy military and naval officers have to be), some are bankers, judges, consuls, governors of provinces, even merchants—though these are few. The fact is that it is almost impossible for anybody to live merely by producing fine literature, and that the literary man must have, in most cases, an occupation. Every year the necessity for this becomes greater. But the principle of literary work is really not to do much at one time, but to do a little at regular intervals. I doubt whether any of you can ever be so busy that you will not be able to spare twenty minutes or half an hour in the course of one day to literature. Even if you should give only ten minutes a day, that will mean a great deal at the end of the year. Put it in another way. Can you not write five lines of literary work daily? If you can, the question of being busy is settled at once. Multiply three hundred and sixty-five by five. That means a very respectable amount of work in twelve months. How much better if you could determine to write twenty or thirty lines every day. I hope that if any of you really love literature, you will remember these few words, and never think yourselves too busy to study a little, even though it be only for ten or fifteen minutes every day. And now good-bye.

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